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## *THE WINDS OF MARCH.*

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### BOOK I.—STORRITH.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### THE FINDING.

STEPHEN ELLIOT lay in the gaunt downstairs room that they had turned into a bedchamber since his illness. Jess Blamire had left him only an hour or so on her way up to the chance meeting with Scroope in the lane, and the old man was still thinking of his god-daughter.

'Women are all crafty, or fools,' he muttered—'or both. But Jess seems better than most. She does seem to care for me, though I'm useless and laid-by. Perhaps she will have my money at the end.'

Then his thoughts took another turn. He recalled every word of Eliza Daunt's at their last meeting—her hope that he might have a grandson born in wedlock. His journey to Caisterby and the Registrar's had been interrupted by the news that Lone Fir was down at last. He had gone instead, in his ramshackle gig driven by the ancient coachman—driver and trap and horse all ready, it seemed, for instant dissolution—to the drenched hill-top, where a gale roared like a beast of prey about the ruined pine.

He had drunk deep of hatred there, growing nimble almost as he forgot the driven rain-gusts. This was reward in plenty for his well-tended hate of Storritth. The second recompense had come as he was driven home. Spent after his ecstasy of glee, the wind and rain probed into tissues ready for them, and now he was here abed, helpless to get to Caisterby.

Sullen rage took hold of him. If only he had the entry in the Registrar's book, he would live or die happy. A clear picture came to him of Scroope, big on a raking thoroughbred, riding the uplands as if he owned all from this to the last end of Beyond. To tear him down from saddle, and see him sprawling in the mud—this might

have been a joy to taste, if he'd not gone to dance a wizard's sort of hornpipe round Lone Fir.

And now he was here, tied hand and foot. Rheumatism was planting red-hot needles with never ceasing industry. He was racked with pain and tumult of the body. Then suddenly, into his troubled brain, came a memory of the big family Bible, lying on the table in the room across the passage. His folk had been 'Hot Gospellers' in the old days, lusty for pains of hell awaiting all sinners but themselves.

He had closed the Book for ever, he had thought, on the day that followed his girl's flight across the moor; but now he hungered for remembered verses that spoke of 'slay and spare not.' It would be relief from pain if he could hobble somehow into the next room and read again certain chapters that embodied his own depth of hatred.

When the hired nurse came in presently, asking if he needed anything, he made pretence of drowsiness and told her to go for a breath of fresh air while she had the chance. He waited, with a sick man's cunning, till he heard her step on the gravel path outside his room. Then, slowly, and with an effort that racked every nerve and sinew, he got to the edge of the bed, groped for his sticks, and hobbled forward.

The floor seemed made of red-hot knives, but he got out into the passage and halted there. From the kitchen came the hum of the maids' voices as they chattered over their work. With extreme pain he crossed to the room across the passage and went in.

All was orderly here. The sunlight flooded every nook and corner, and found no cobwebs. If he had not touched the Bible lying on the centre table, other hands had tended it. No dust lay on its black covers, on the massive clasps. He opened it at random, and his heart warmed to the first verse he read. It spoke of the righteous going to battle with foredoomed heathens whose bodies would soon be prey for dogs.

This was meant for the Scroopes of Storrieth. Sure of it, Elliot read on to the chapter's end. The next Psalm rang out a litany of praise to mountain winds and teeming crops of lambs, dropped by ewes bleating on a thousand hills. Impatiently he turned the leaves. This shepherds' sort of high romance was not for him.

Again he found chapters to his liking; and once more the unalterable human joy in hills and the vagrant ways of peace intruded. Impatiently he turned the pages, till for the first time he noticed an edge of paper protruding from the middle of the Bible.

Thinking it had been placed there to mark some special passage, and eager in pursuit of the divination he was practising, he opened at the marked place. He grew very still on the sudden, like one who dreams a good dream and fears to wake. He was peering down at the paper lying there—a formal document, with spaces filled in by a prim, clerkly hand.

Dazed for a while, he passed a hand across his eyes, afraid almost of the unbelievable that happened in this sunlit room. Then he peered once more at his treasure-trove. His daughter's name was on the slip of paper looking up at him. So was Scroope's of Storrieth—'Old Scroope,' mouldered in his grave long since, and long since done with gallantries.

He read and reread the simple record of his girl's marriage, then folded the paper and glanced about him stealthily. What he held was so precious that he feared robbery and ambush. In this half-demented mood of his he had a sharp picture of the whole countryside in arms to snatch from him the proof he held—proof of his daughter's honour and of much beside.

He left the room, taking great care that his sticks should make little noise across the boarded flooring of the passage. The maids' voices still sounded from the kitchen as they chattered idly. Unseen and unheard, he got to bed again, and waited till his nurse came in, all fresh air and cheeriness after her brief scamper out-of-doors.

When asked if he wanted anything, Elliot said Yes. He wanted Eliza Daunt to be brought at once. His doctor and nurse together had failed to get the pains out of his body, and now he was bent on seeing what Mrs. Daunt could do. She was skilled, they said, in herb-lore and the curing of disease.

The nurse smiled tolerantly, as if a child had to be humoured, and an hour later she ushered in Mrs. Daunt with the same good-tempered air of raillery.

'Here is your cure-all, Mr. Elliot,' she said. 'I'll find you ready for out-of-doors again when I return.'

Elliot glanced to make sure that the door was closed on them. 'You've been slow in coming, Eliza Daunt,' he said.

'How quick would you have me be—my cottage a mile from this, and my legs no younger for old age?'

'They'd have been nimble enough if you'd known why I'd sent for you.'

His hands fumbled for the paper. Even now he was reluctant to give it into other keeping, and twice he snatched it back before he trusted her.

'Read it, woman! There's no need now to go to the Registrar's at Caisterby.'

Eliza looked up from her reading with a dry laugh. 'I brought my herb-cures up, as your starched woman of a nurse told me—but I reckon you've found a better cure.'

'I have,' said Elliot.

'Where did you find it—if I might ask?'

'That's not for me to tell. I hold it, and it's mine.'

For a moment he was conquered by pain and the after-weariness of tense excitement. Then he gathered his lifetime's pluck for hatred, and smiled at Eliza Daunt.

'Out of those marriage-lines a son came—heir to Storrieth. And you know where the heir is, Eliza Daunt. You told me as much.'

'Yes, I know.'

He raised himself impatiently. 'Don't stand there with your queer, crooked smile, telling me nothing.'

'You tell me little enough, if it comes to that. I'm curious to learn where you found that piece of paper.'

'In the old family Bible. There's no reason why I shouldn't tell you; but I've waited a long while for this, and it makes me wary.'

'There now,' mocked Eliza Daunt. 'I fancied you and the Book kept little company nowadays.'

'I'd not opened it since the night *she* went over the moors in the storm. And there the paper was, though how it got there——'

'It's all coming back to me,' broke in the other. 'That night we scampered through the storm—me, and she, and the unborn little 'un—it all comes back. She talked a deal after we'd got into shelter o' the barn—light-headed talk, I fancied it, all about how she'd knelt down by the big family Bible before she slipped away from the house here. She wanted a blessing on her going, poor child. Then she raved about a step overhead, and how she shut the Book, and crept away into the darkness and the rain.'

'It was my step she heard,' said Elliot, his face working piteously. 'I woke to a sound of sobbing in the room below, and got out of bed to learn what it meant; but when I came downstairs there was nobody to be found.'

'*She* had put her marriage-lines on the Bible page she was reading—and left the lines inside in her hurry to escape. That's how I piece the tale together—though none of us can do more than guess. At any rate, you've got all you need.'

'No.' Every line of softness had gone from the man's face.



His voice was hard, relentless. 'No, woman. I need more. Bring me the heir—let me see and touch him, to make sure he's flesh and blood. Bring him to-day.'

'A likely thing. Bring him to-day—as if he lived on your doorstep.'

'Well, I was hasty. I've dreamed of this so long that I cannot wait, I tell you, now it is almost in my hand. Could you bring him to-morrow?'

Eliza was regarding him with cat-like, passionless intentness. 'The day after, maybe.'

'Have it your own way, if it must be,' grumbled Elliot, glowering at her from under his grey brows.

He lay back on his pillows, and for a time nothing broke the silence but the grave ticking of the eight-day clock in the corner. The pendulum's steady beat kept time to the old man's thoughts, and guided them.

'Scroope's life has been like that,' he said presently. '*Tick-tack*, day in and day out—nothing to hinder his whims and pleasures—all as smooth going as a turnpike road. And now there'll be nothing smooth again for Roger Scroope.'

'Ay, you're bitter enough,' snapped Eliza approvingly. 'You're so quiet about it—like a moorland bog waiting for a traveller. Hate couldn't go deeper—except mine, maybe.'

'Except yours,' Elliot agreed, with the same quiet fervour. 'He's his father's son, and on that count I wish him a long life after we've done with him. May he live to ninety, remembering every minute what he's lost. He doesn't know what Storrieth means to him—but he will do soon, when house and lands go.'

'Ay, that's true. I've watched him grow up with Storrieth. It's his world. I've said to myself often, "If he'd married a wife and lost her," I've said, "he'd fret for as long as was seasonable. But, if Storrieth went he'd fret for ever."'

The clock ticked on. The storm that long ago swept Elliot's girl out across the moor had left it unhurried. The tempest brewing over Storrieth now disturbed no cadence of its steady to and fro. Destiny, precise and unfeeling, seemed to control its every life-beat.

'I'm thinking of that grandson you're bringing,' said Elliot. 'He'll be half a Scroope; but there's bitterness in every cup. I'm picturing what he's like. Taller even than Roger Scroope, and broader. A great, upstanding figure of a man, with the wind-brown Elliot look about him. That's my picture.'

'I've naught to do with your dreams. You'll see him in two days' time.'

Elliot grew practical again. 'Then I'll send to my lawyer to come out.'

'I should. Folk who've waited long are always in a hurry. I'm in a sweat of haste myself, now Lone Fir's down and you've found that bit of paper. Things have a trick, I've found, of jumping all together.'

Elliot lost something of his eagerness. 'There'll be birth-lines needed, too. We'd forgotten that.'

'Speak for yourself, Mr. Elliot. I've had them safe in my cottage for thirty years and odd. They're there now, whenever your lawyer wants them. And now you're all in a twitter again at the news.'

'I was thinking,' said Elliot, scratching with his gnarled hands at the bed-cover. 'It darted into my mind that there might have been a fire in your cottage, any time these thirty years.'

'There might; but I'd a place no fire could touch—a snug place enough, and safe from thieves as well.'

Elliot's grim, hard look of satisfaction returned as he watched his visitor get up with a word of leave-taking.

'You've done well by me, Eliza Daunt,' he said, 'and I never forget enemy or friend.'

'But specially enemies,' she retorted, with a rasping laugh.

She turned at the door, and Elliot, if he had been less pre-occupied, might well have been startled by the glance she gave him. Her face, sinister enough at any time, was lit by subdued merriment—a mirth ghoulish and ironic. Then she was gone, closing the door on a man given over to dreams of vengeance striding through the grey house of Storrieth.

## CHAPTER IX.

AUDREY CLARE.

OUT at Tring, the lost hamlet of the wastes, evening drew down on the hollow where once the broken waterwheel had hummed its sturdy song. The light was tender with this place of vanished industry. The millmaster's house of other days stood in ruined dignity, lichen and mosses softening every gaping crevice. The millpond's waters plashed lazily against its reedy banks.

Audrey Clare came up from the ravine that hid her cottage, inhabited till lately by Poacher Jake, and tenanted still by the old rascal's ghost, if country gossip had anything behind it. Already she had grown into friendship with this hamlet of which she was the only living tenant. Here she had found sanctuary when life assailed her from all sides. She had come to it asking for such loneliness, and had found solace; and never afterwards, whatever chanced, could destiny rob her of love at first sight of the crumbled limestone hills, guarding this bygone dingle where all was musical with choirs of the busy yesterdays.

Men had sung here as they tended thrifty looms. Smoke had curled up from the dead chimney-stacks, and children had laughed and played about the lane where now was silence. This very silence had grown dear to Audrey Clare. It was so close, so friendly, that at times she half expected it to lose its reticence and speak to her of bygone days.

Her own old days seemed remote enough as she stood now in what had been the millmaster's garden. Burdocks and wild parsley grew rank about the place. A clump of fallen masonry lay here and there, wreckage of a lost prosperity. But overhead the fruit-trees were still in bearing, and apples were taking on the burnished sheen of autumn. At the garden-foot a thicket of wild raspberries glowed crimson in the after-light.

The girl took heart from this life in death. Trouble had not conquered the eagerness of her nature to reach forward always to the hopeful signs. She was of Scroope's breed; and in his place, after Lone Fir had fallen to the wind's will, she would have done the same—planted a healthy sapling to fill the gap.

Her thoughts roamed backward in little gusts and eddies—back to the tumult escaped. It was worth while almost to have gone through the nightmare time for sake of this peace that was stealing into her life. But for the troubled days she would not have known how good it was to share Tring's quiet. She understood it now; and thanksgiving, as of evensong, mingled with the sun's farewell where the sky dipped to the hills above.

A step sounded down the lane. Light as it was, its intrusion into the stillness seemed harsh and noisy. She resented a stranger's entry into her new-found liberty to be alone. Nearer and nearer the steps came, till round the bend of the hazel coppice a neat, small figure strode into the evening glow.

Audrey stood there under the clustered apple-boughs. Peace

had gone from the evening quiet, and the breeze, playful a moment since, seemed chill and bitter. She was so motionless that the wayfarer might have passed on, unheeding; but he turned his head at the sudden cry of an owl, hunting somewhere up the shadowed glen beyond.

His quick stride stopped abruptly, and into his mobile face a light of keen satisfaction crept.

'So my journey's ended, Audrey,' he said.

She did not answer. Every instinct of repulsion, mixed with a strange dread, showed in the face that had been young before he turned the lane corner. They stood regarding each other in silence, burdensome and uncanny, till the man spoke again, accusingly.

'We had not been an hour married when you ran away. What had I done?'

'I never cared for you,' said Audrey Clare, her voice vehement and low. 'When you came into my life again now—here in Tring—I loathed your coming. But now I'm glad.'

Her beauty enticed his random heart. He coveted his own wife, and told her so.

'Will you always lie to me? You wanted me for myself—that was your cry when you tempted me into a foolish marriage. I believed you.'

His glib eagerness was checked. She had stood aloof from him often in other days, but not with this self-reliance. 'You were glad of my coming, you said just now.'

'Yes. All these months I've been almost happy—but under the peace was just this need to tell you that I never cared. My pride was hurt; and now it's healed.'

'Audrey,' he said, recovering the quality that would have made him a great actor if luck had taken his feet to the theatre-boards, 'Audrey, was it my fault that you left me?'

'Yes,' she answered unexpectedly. 'You left me in the inn, you will remember, while you went to see the horses put in for the first stage of our journey. You were long in returning—so long that you found me gone. Perhaps I was tired of waiting.'

'There was a good reason for my absence.' He was uneasy, aware of some subtle irony in all she said.

'Tell me,' said Audrey, her glance never wavering.

'All my life, somehow, I've been in troubles that were none of my making. The last of them was a murder charge. They set me

free of that yesterday, and since then I've been seeking you afresh. Is it a crime for a man to want his own wife ?'

'You were always a wanderer,' she said, with crisp disdain. 'Cannot you keep even your mind steady for a moment ? I'm waiting to hear why you left me at the inn that day.'

'I was suspected of forgery. All the evidence was dead against me, as it was at Caisterby on the murder charge.'

'And you married me before you cleared yourself ?'

'I wanted you so, Audrey.'

She knew that he was speaking truth. It amazed her that, in spite of all, he was passionately her slave. Her own nature, open as dawn on heather moors, could only probe at haphazard into the intricacies of his ; and she shrank with sharpened instinct from what, to him, was love.

'You wanted me so much that you could leave me to be the jest and byword of a country inn ?'

'I'd no choice. A friend brought word that the pursuit was a mile away, with a warrant for my arrest. So I chose to take cover, Audrey, rather than mix you up with an arrest. That's my tale. I've gone through miles of this hill-country to tell you—and in between, as I said, they nearly gaoled me down there at Caisterby.'

'And now for *my* tale,' said Audrey, drawing back as from a pestilence. 'When you left me in the inn you forgot that the window was open. You were pacing up and down outside in great agitation, talking to some stranger. I tried not to hear—tried not to believe what I heard.'

The man's self-assurance left him. He had been prepared to lie with easy freedom. In all his preparation for this meeting, sought so patiently, he had built on the certainty that Audrey knew nothing of the truth.

'I was desperate,' he said.

'Yes, that was plain enough.' She paused, to conquer the memory of that bygone hour—its bitterness and travail. 'The friend with you—accomplice to the forgery—came to warn you. He came, too, to ask his price. And you told him'—a little shiver of disgust ran across her merciless calm—'told him there was plenty of money, now you were safely married.'

She passed a hand across her eyes, and was silent. When she glanced up again there was no trace of emotion in her face.

'I waited for you to go out of my life. And still you share it. Teach me any words that will thrash you into shame.'

He had found his own queer hardihood, that in itself was courage of a sort. 'I loved you, Audrey—then and now.'

Again she knew that through all his twisted life of subterfuge one thing was steady. And again she recoiled from the baseness of his very constancy.

'I could have forgiven you the forgery—forgiven everything, perhaps, if I had cared.'

'I'll teach you to care.'

'Never in this world. It would have happened that day, if at all. I came a child to our wedding. Then afterwards, when I listened all against my will to what you said, I grew into womanhood. It was then I knew my heart, and you'd no place in it. I thanked God. I'm thankful still.'

'I have to go, Audrey,' he said, with quiet savagery; 'but if you hid deeper still in these confounded hills I'd find you.'

'You have to go?' she repeated eagerly.

'For a while—till this last trouble has blown over.' Now that she knew the worst of him, he was cynical in his frankness. 'When a man's tried for his life, with everything against him till he's proved innocent, the donkey-witted public goes mad with sloppiness. He's a saint through and through, they fancy. The police do not.'

Audrey only half heard him. She was clinging to this new hope—that he must go. A great fear was lifting. He might have stayed, might have claimed her. And he was going.

'I was not risking what the law might have learned about my past while it worked up the prosecution. They didn't rearrest me after the trial on a forgery charge; so, when I'd recovered from surprise on that account, I just slipped down Caisterby Street and out into the country. My first thought was to start on my travels again in search of you.'

'Why?' she asked, with bitter challenge. 'Are you—are you needing more money?'

'No. I'm needing you, and you're my wife.'

The old fear returned, a burden weighing her down. This lonely hamlet, bordered by hills whose only people were farmer-folk, cattle and sheep, and winds blowing from the heather, had been heart's ease and sanctuary. Ever a little and a little more she had learned to forget that grim waiting in the inn for a bridegroom who did not return. And now he had come back.

'We married for better or worse,' said Clare. 'You promised that.'

Audrey's simple candour answered his quick-witted appeal to duty. 'I keep my promises,' she said, aloof and cold. 'And you have to go? There's danger in your staying?'

Clare glanced backward to the hill-top on this side of Caisterby. He had forgotten the pursuit of his own imagining; but now he fancied there were officers of law on every hillock. He took her in his arms, before she was aware, and kissed her, till she forced herself apart from the embrace.

He snarled at her unwillingness, then glanced behind again. 'I've to go into hiding, Audrey; but I'll find you when the trouble's over.'

She watched him as he took the path beside the millpool—watched him till he was hidden by the tangle of briar-rose and hazel dipping to the water. And fear took hold of her.

Dread had been held at bay. She had persuaded herself that she was hidden safely from the shame and tumult of her brief wedlock. Each day that passed without intrusion had fostered her dream of security, till she had grown to ask nothing of the future except grace to live on here, free and at peace.

That dream's ruins lay about her now. She struggled to recapture strength, and no courage came. Girlhood seemed centuries away. Womanhood had scarcely taken its first stride forward, and reeled backward from the suddenness of Clare's arrival.

He had gone—but for how long? All that was sinister in his good-bye showed plain. He would return. What duty could she owe to the man whose glance had coveted her with wolf-like, still ferocity?

*For better or worse.* The words went round and about in her mind with sick iteration. She had pledged her word to that. Clare had reminded her of her marriage vow—he, who had gone into the wastes, a hunted man. She would have shrunk less from him if he had not looked behind so constantly as he ran up the water-side. He had forgotten her, and had married panic instead.

The stillness grew unbearable. She passed through the silent hamlet, and a longing came, wild as the tears that would not fall, to be as these old-time workers in the mill had been. Simple folk, living remote from the world's harshness, they must have known the true content.

She went down by the rock stairway to her cottage. The half-grown puppy, Peter, fell over himself with joy at her return; but he could not entice her from heart-sickness. He knew it. His tail, as it thumped on the floor, grew limp. It was then that, by



some odd byway of remembrance, a clear picture came of the day when she was lost in the mists of Lanty Water. Out of the mist a horseman had come as by a miracle. She could see him now, as he had shown when they reached the top of their perilous climb—a self-possessed, quiet man, grave after danger won through safely, who grew restless when she thanked him for saving her life from Lanty Water.

She had not known how clearly that picture had taken shape, how it had rooted itself into her heart. The rider had been like her girlhood's dreams of what a man should be. And instead her life was tangled, till it ended, with that of the glib rascal who had found her hiding-place at last.

Suddenly the tears came, raining down on Peter's thick door-mat of a body.

'Peter, I'm tired,' she said—'tired and afraid.'

## CHAPTER X.

### ON RICKERBY MOSS.

CLARE slackened pace a mile or so out of Tring. The track was steep, and the heat had scarcely lessened with the sun's decline. He began to throw off a little of his fear. Each stride was taking him farther into these lonely wastes where the Law might hunt its quarry for ever, and fail in the pursuit.

He recalled his own search for Audrey. Though at his first coming he had traced her to the borders of Tring Moor, he had gone by the hamlet, and had only happened on it by luck just now through mistaking the guidance of a sign-post on the heights above. If she could have hidden so securely, surely he had a better chance in the further wilderness. And when the trouble had died down he would return to Tring, as he had promised.

A pleasant breeze met him when he got up from the lane-track into the open heath. His spirits rose. Not long since he had been a prisoner. He recalled the scene in court with sharp-cut clearness. Imaginative, quick to picture joy or trouble, he had felt the touch of the hangman's rope about his throat. Then Scroope had come to free him. And now he had found Audrey. Undoubtedly his luck was in.

He began to hum an air as he strode into the breeze. He had a pleasant, mellow voice, and during his mixed wayfaring had picked

up a knowledge of old ballads. With whimsical irony he broke into full song now, remembering how he had learned the air from a Scottish beggar-man who had little but music to cheer him forward.

'Maxwellton braes are bonnie, where early fa's the dew,  
And it's there that Annie Laurie gi'ed me her promise true.

Her voice is low and sweet, and she's a' the world to me,  
And for bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me doon and dee.'

Clare felt a rare glow of sentiment. His own voice, singing the ballad, touched him. He thought of Audrey, down there at Tring, and persuaded himself that in some way, not definitely explained, he had it in him to lie down and die for love of her. Sentiment was fostered, too, by memory of the snug income—Audrey's—that they would share in days to come.

As he came to the top of the road his singing ceased. Impressionable to a degree that puzzled himself at times, he felt the chill of Rickerby Moss strike at him as if a dead hand touched his face. Morose and flat, the Moss stretched out in comfortless monotony. No heather grew. No tree relieved the sullen green of bog-grass, the black peat acres that caught the evening glow and stifled it.

It was a place, Clare felt, that harboured ghosts. Gaunt, terrible things had happened here once on a time, and the land could not forget. Fear, stealthy and silent, seemed to walk beside him. He wanted to run away from this nothingness that was so real.

With a relief that in another place would have seemed absurd, he saw a fellow-traveller on the Moss. An old, bent man was walking a hundred yards or so ahead, a grey sheep-dog glued to his heels so close that master and dog seemed one, till the collie, hearing Clare's step, ran back and growled.

Clare spoke to him, then reached down a hand, as he had done when Scroope's retriever had snarled at him in Pallins churchyard. His gift for instant friendship with dogs, uncanny almost in its certainty, met with the same response; and the old man in front, turning to learn the cause of this brief commotion, waited till Clare came up.

'So it's you?' he said, aloof and dour.

'Yes. Your evidence didn't hang me, after all.'

'It didn't; but your own conscience will one day.'

'Man, you're daft. You heard one of your own country—'

Scroope his name was ?—swear that he talked with me, miles away, when you found the body on the road.'

'I've a liking for Mr. Scroope, but he can make mistakes like other men. The more I see of you, the surer I am that you knifed that dying vagabond I found. As for that dog o' mine,' he broke off, with rankling jealousy, 'I'd never have believed he'd wag his tail for such as you.'

'He has more sense than his master,' snarled Clare. 'I was cursing this barren, lost land when I overtook you; but he's friendlier.'

'Maybe; but we haven't much time to fratch. I'm going no farther than that bit of a cottage yonder. I haven't been to it for a fortnight.'

'Been in the lowlands, have you?'

The shepherd glanced at him with slow contempt. 'This is the lowlands. We've been up on the stark tops, me and my dog, watching our sheep. And now we've come down for a cosy time at home.'

Clare did not relish the man's stubborn withdrawal from him. He pointed with impish malice to the chimney-stack of the cottage, nestling in a grey hollow of the hill that frowned on Rickerby Moss.

'Somebody has been living there, Shepherd, while you're away.'

The old man stood stock-still, watching the peat-smoke drift, thin and quiet, into the little eddies of the wind. Jealousy took hold of him again. He cared for few things in this life—pride in his dog, in his own wind-swept hardihood, in his cottage and the safety of his flocks. But for these he cared as others loved wealth and ease. It amazed him that any man dared intrude into his homestead.

'There seems to be a plague of wastrels round about the place,' he muttered, with a dry side-glance at Clare; 'but I'll teach this one what I think of housebreaking before he's a minute older.'

The cottage door stood open to the sultry breeze, and the shepherd stopped abruptly on the threshold. Wrath had died in him, it seemed. When he went in, Clare followed, stirred by curiosity to learn what had changed the other's temper so completely. The sunglow slanted straight into the room, and on the settle by the hearth a man lay, his eyes bright with fever. Clare was bewildered. Somewhere he had seen the man before. Memory, when he tried to stir it, suggested a shaving-glass, and he began to fancy that he, too, had a touch of fever.

'I'm glad you're here,' said the man on the settle. He spoke quickly, as if time were short. 'An old woman looked in, hours

ago, to fettle your place up a bit. When she saw me she screamed. Then she saw how it was with me, and set off for the doctor. He's not come, and small use if he did—except to bear witness.'

He lay back for a while, exhausted, and the shepherd glanced from him to Clare, and back again, with puzzled question.

'I'm glad you're here,' repeated the sick man, gathering his strength again. 'I shall have escaped before the day's out; but I've been worrying about other folk.'

'Escaped?' mumbled the shepherd. .

'There was a body found on the road—cut about with knife wounds. I wish there'd been a dozen more.' A borrowed vigour held him upright on the settle. His voice was keen and clear. 'The man they found had taken my wife from me. He'd left her to die in shame and want. I got to grips with him at last on the Moss. He drew a knife, and so did I.'

A harsh spell of coughing interrupted him, and a trickle of crimson ran out at the corners of his mouth. He conquered that.

'When he'd gone where I sent him, there was time to think of myself. I didn't mean to be hanged for such as he. It was then that I felt blood dripping out of me, and crept to what shelter I could get.'

He spoke in a clipped, quick fashion, as if words were few and precious.

'I found the cottage door unlocked——'

'Ay, we don't lock doors up hereabout,' said the shepherd, gruff and restless.

'And I made myself a fire, and shivered over it till a bit of warmth came back. What I'd done didn't trouble me. I was proud to have settled a long score at last. I wanted to live. A man does, if he's an ounce of spunk in him. I wanted to nurse what strength was left, so I could get away from prying folk who'd found something on the road—something that wouldn't ever whisper in a woman's ear again.'

He laughed quietly, but the red streak bubbled at his lips once more.

'Lie still a while,' growled the shepherd. 'It hurts you to talk.'

'I've to say my say. I found stale bread and oatmeal and a little keg of rum, and I ate and drank. I wanted to live and get away. But that dream is finished, and now I've only one thought. They'll fasten the man's death on somebody who had no hand in it.'

The shepherd had a keen ear, honestly come by on the heights,

for distant sounds. So, from a different training, had Clare. Both glanced through the open doorway, listening to the fret of hoofs.

'That will be Doctor,' said the shepherd, 'though he must have borrowed a horse. That *clinkety-clank*—sharp and speedy—has naught to do with his old mare.'

Clare forgot the dying man. He was thinking of pursuit. The very suggestion of a rider going sharp and speedy brought all his terrors back. They had learned his record in Caisterby, as he had feared. It never occurred to him that, for such small fry as he, the Law did not waste money on mounting its police.

The shepherd blocked the doorway, and Clare heard him greet the rider, drawing rein suddenly with a rattle of hoofs on the road.

'So it isn't Doctor, after all.'

'No. Why should it be?' asked the horseman, pulling up with a scrunch of scattered gravel.

'Because he's been sent for. There's a dying man in here.'

Clare knew the voice, and the worst of his fears were quieted. He listened to the little sounds that went to the tethering of a bridle to a ring at the cottage doorway. Then Scroope came in, big and lusty, with smell of the heather in his clothes.

Scroope glanced through the draughty peat-smoke to the sick man on the settle—from him to Clare—and the shepherd, catching the glance, nodded soberly.

'As like as two peas. No wonder I was mistaken.'

Clare had the answer to his riddle now. The face that looked up at him from the settle was the face he saw in the glass of mornings. The slight, wiry figure might have been his own. Every man had his double somewhere in the world. He had heard and believed as much; but to meet that double in the confines of a narrow room was disturbing and uncanny.

The dying man made his last effort. 'I'm glad there are three witnesses. I was telling, when you came by, how I killed a rogue on the uplands, and for what reason. I'll not have any murder-hunt fastened on some poor fool who blunders into the police—not if I can help it.'

Scroope went to the settle, and stood there, grave and brief. 'I'm a magistrate, as it happens.'

'That's good. You've paper and pencil in your pocket, maybe? Then take down what I have to say. There isn't much of it.'

He told his tale afresh, held death at bay for a moment as he

glanced about the little room with its thin, vibrant smell of burning peats.

'There are three witnesses,' he said, 'and that should be enough.'

But Scroope, when he turned to beckon Clare forward for his signature, found that the shepherd and he were alone with the man, who had lain back on the settle and sighed once, and afterwards was silent.

One of these two, so like each other that none could have told them apart, had taken the Far Adventure once for all. And Clare had gone into the narrower unknown that lay where the long dales raked out, touched hands, and took their ways into the striding wilderness of rock and red heather, bogs, and pastured slopes.

'Gone away,' snarled the shepherd—'gone away, the slinking fox.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GRANDSON HEIR.

SCROOPE, when he rode out again from the shepherd's hut, remembered—with poignant clearness—the father who had tried to plant old wisdom in a young head. The very tone of the deep, buoyant voice was in his ear.

'Mark this, my lad. There are years in a man's life when all goes right. If he tries to trip himself up with folly, he can't do it. Life's like wedding-bells at those times. Then the lean years come. Strive as he will, he can't do right. All goes like a broken-winded horse, lame on its four legs. It's then life tries a man, whether he has the root of the matter in him.'

The shadow of some great, personal grief lay already on Scroope's heart. Why it was there he could not tell; but it was real. Perhaps he was influenced more than he would admit by the superstition of the neighbours touching Lone Fir's fall. Then, too, Elliot's gloating enmity had its effect, laugh at it as he might. And now he was saddled with this bleak tragedy that had happened in the shepherd's hut.

The scene lived in his mind. He could not rid himself of the picture of the dying man, so grim in his plain tale of a fight with knives, so pluckily resolved to live long enough to clear all others from risk of the hangman's services. Nor could he throw off the affair with his old, easy 'What has it to do with me?' He was so

intimately concerned that his ride, which should have gone by way of Lanty Water, took a wide circuit. The doctor had to be found and sent up to Rickerby Moss on his fat, bellows-to-mend old mare. The one constable that patrolled wide acres had to be found and sent the same journey.

There was nobody else to take these errands. The shepherd was too infirm, and not a soul, horsed or on foot, met him on the road. When at last, his duties ended for awhile, he took the long, dipping track to Lanty Water, trouble still rode pillion behind.

He was disturbed—irrationally disturbed—by memory of the girl-woman who lived in Tring's deserted hamlet. Yesterday, needs must, he had saved her husband from a fate richly deserved in other ways, no doubt. To-day he had found the slippery rogue returned to a country that wanted none of him. Why had he got up in the court-house and cleared the man? He could have done no less, of course; but what a folly it had been. Again, he was thinking of Clare's wife, of a persecution that would some day be renewed.

He rode through Tring's rose-grey dusk. Ring-doves called sleepily. A bat, out hawking, almost brushed his face. The stream lapped and fretted through the broken sluice-gate. The unalterable peace crept home, as it had always done, to heal his darker moods. Storrieth was his, and Gayle, and a good horse under him. What more could a man ask of life? And there was Jess, who was to marry him by and by—Jess, who was part of his life since boyhood's days.

For all that, he felt a sharp, foolish disappointment as he rode past the hamlet, glanced into the ravine, and saw no light shining upward from the cottage that had once been Poacher Jake's. As his horse went, restless and wary, down the precipice road that had sent a spume of mist to hinder them, not long ago, Scroope remembered her hand at his stirrup, the breathless hazard, her thanks as she stood in the sunlight with the wet mist in her hair. It seemed outrageous that her life should be linked to Adrian Clare's.

He rode forward with an impatient shrug. This trouble, at any rate, was no concern of his, and Lanty Water was laying her wonted spell on him. The water lay grey and still, mother of a hundred silences that spoke to her alone. Stray, last shafts of crimson touched the hills above, and a buttercup-yellow moon, climbing the pine-tops, slipped in and out between the dancing clouds. No light, of sun or moon, softened the face of Lanty Water. She was her



brooding self, and every tale that clustered thick about this haunted lake returned to Scroope.

All tales were believable, when Lanty said nothing to her intimates, and yet spoke. In the long and the long ago there had been a thriving village where now the waters lay. The deserted hamlet up above was young even in decay ; but this village had been here through forgotten ages. Then a night had come when tempest raved from the hills, and the rains would not be done.

The village cared nothing. It lay snug and safe. But the old beggar-man, toiling through the storm, cared much. His drenched rags flapped to the wind. He was sick-weary with cold and hunger, and his heart leaped up again in him, alive, when he saw the village lights below.

He clambered down on blistered feet, and came to the first house at the foot of the village street. The door was opened, and shut again in his face. They wanted no beggars in their thrifty village—had never encouraged such. And so the tale went at every door till he reached the last house, standing on top of the straddled street. And here they took him in, and fed and warmed him till his old bones stirred in sleep that night in gratitude for pains gone by.

That night, too, the rains broke down a bog on the high moors. The torrent took the village in its stride, dammed the bottom of its street with great forest logs, dead centuries ago, but tough and hardened by the peat that had been their grave-soil. Only one house was left to look down on the flood that stayed in the hollow, and grew in a night to the bigness of Lanty Water. The one farmstead saved had offered shelter to the beggar-man ; and it happened to be Scroope's own house of Gayle.

Scroope halted, though his horse was impatient for supper and Gayle's dry, roomy stable. He had liked that ancient fairy-tale with tolerant good humour ; but now, somehow, it took on a new significance. So did the pool, lying grim and breezeless just below.

The moorlanders had no other name for it. It was just 'The Pool,' lest they should affront its infinite malice by giving it a friendly name. It lay, deep and fathomless, where the stream, loosed from the narrow ghyll above, plunged into freedom. It had grown to be one of the old menaces that lingered in the moors, to all men's knowledge. They feared it as they dreaded the Bog Sprite, dancing like a friendly lantern to lure men to the marshes, or the Great Red Dwarf, whose joy was to sit on a boulder up among the heather and pounce on wayfarers.

They spoke of the Pool guardedly, as a place to which tired men came for suicide, and were not allowed to change their purpose at the eleventh hour. Once on its margin, folk grew aware of hands reaching up to them—sinewy, eager hands that gripped and dragged. It was said that nearly as many bones of men were buried here as lay in Pallins churchyard.

The witchcraft of the place had taken such hold of Scroope that he sat there motionless, till through the gloaming dusk a woman came—came with slow, tired steps that halted for a moment at the pool. Then, with a shiver of dismay, she turned her face from the water and moved forward wearily.

Scroope's horse—more than his rider, maybe—had been aware of ghostly peril, and he neighed with sharp disquiet. Audrey Clare, intent on her own misery, had thought herself alone in the gathering twilight. She stood very still, looking up at the silent horseman who regarded her with such friendly gravity.

'I was foolish,' she said. 'You startled me——'

'Not for the first time. It's not long since I nearly rode you down.'

'And saved me from the mist. I—I have wanted to thank you again for guiding me. Why is your land so tender and so cruel?'

'Because it's our land. It was made so from the start.'

Restless, and afraid, and keeping what hold she could on pride in courage, she took a step forward, then stayed irresolute. 'There is Tring with its peace. The birds sing there, and the squirrels play bo-peep with one in the trees. But Lanty Water has no songs.'

'That's as well, maybe. They'd be dirges, if she sang at all.'

'She whispered that to me just now, as I came by. She's cruel to the heart.'

The gloaming was tender with her straight, self-reliant figure, with the hair that caught stray moon-gleams in its meshes. Scroope wondered all afresh how she could have stooped to marry Adrian Clare, and recalled the shepherd's hut, far up the wastes—recalled the dead man on the settle, and his living double who had slunk out into the wilderness.

'So is life,' he said, thinking of her troubles as if they were his own. 'Life's hard, and so is Lanty Water.'

'You've found it hard?' she asked, with eager question.

'Not I. But you have.'

She gathered her pride home then. She had little else left her these days, and must keep it bright. What was she doing here, sharing intimacy of thought with this kindly stranger?

Yet he could never again be a stranger. She recalled how the mists had swirled up from Lanty Water and caught her—remembered his sudden coming and his help in need. She had been grateful; but now she asked herself if Lanty's way were not the better. There were worse fates than to join the drowned folk in the pool.

Perplexed, desperately proud and weary, she bade him good-night and went up the track. Scroope watched her till she passed beyond a jutting boulder, then shook his horse into a trot. Ahead, he saw his house of Gayle, long, grey and low against the background of its sheltering moor. Lights showed here and there, in token that Merrilees, gamekeeper and body-servant, was ready for his coming.

He was not a man prone to fancies. Weather and horses and land-owning kept him too busy. But he was shaken out of the old pleasant routine to-night. Gayle had never sent him so quiet a welcome and appeal.

It had been his mother's; and old days and new were gathered into a happy tangle. The twinkling lights of Gayle showed nearer, through a dusk that came down from the heather on gentle feet. It seemed to him that his mother had not gone away at all, but was here beside him, ready with the practical, tart charm of other days.

Far off, near Storrieth, Scroope's other house, old Stephen Elliot waited in his bleak homestead that stood four-square to every moorland wind that blew. He had thrust rheumatism and all else aside, in readiness for Eliza Daunt's promised coming. She would bring his grandson to him about eight of the evening, she had said, and Elliot, watching the sun get down toward the moor's edge, judged that the hour was near.

Since finding the proof that this grandson was heir to Storrieth, Elliot had never ceased to frame mind-pictures of the man. Sometimes he would see him on horseback, sometimes on foot, striding moors that were his own; but always he was big and broad, a figure challenging the admiration or envy of his neighbours.

Now that Eliza was due—and she was a woman who kept her promises—his impatience grew feverish. After all these years of waiting, he was to have his prayers answered in full. He could wait no longer for the sight and touch of this upstanding grandson who was to bring Scroope into the dust. *Into the dust!* His thoughts returned to the Old Testament, borrowing its imagery.

He turned his head suddenly, listening to voices and the sound

of footsteps in the passage. His housekeeper knocked quietly, ushered in Eliza and Wee Daunt, and closed the door again on a scene cold and almost terrible in its irony.

'You are punctual,' said Elliot.

'It's my habit.'

'Yes, yes,' he snapped, frowning at Wee Daunt.

She caught the glance, and bridled. 'What's amiss with him, that he shouldn't come with me? Is he too homely for your genteel house?'

'He's well enough—but, woman, do you know how I've hungered for my grandson? Where is he?'

'Here,' said Eliza Daunt.

The dwarf looked on. He had been always a looker-on, and had gained an uncanny vision of his own. He saw these two face each other, still as death, but not as peaceful. Enmity, harsh and stubborn, was in his mother's twisted smile. Abysmal rage held Elliot as in a frenzy.

'How dare you play with me, woman? This bastard of yours——'

'Is neither mine nor a bastard. You hold his mother's marriage-lines, and I've his birth-lines. The thing's as plain as noonday.'

She took the paper from a worn old pocket-book, and unfolded it with jealous care. The entries were in order, but still Elliot was slow to believe.

'There was a son born—but who is to say that Wee Daunt's the son? His very name denies it.'

'The name was given him by the moorside, and I let it rest at that. If they chose to think he was mine, they were welcome—especially as it kept them off the scent of what I've been trying to prove all these years. But I've kept in touch with the place he was born in. There are folk living there who have seen him, off and on, since he was a baby.'

Wee Daunt broke into a grave chuckle. 'I always had a riddle buzzing away at the back of my mind, and now it's answered. I'm a Scroope, and always was.'

'I've brought your grandson,' said Eliza, breaking a queer silence; 'and now you're glowering at me as if I'd brought the devil himself. Men are hard to please.'

He answered, not so much the words as the woman's bitter malice, instinct in her face and voice. 'You're glad to have put this on me.'

'Listen, Stephen Elliot. I was a maid in your house when you were younger. You were not so dry and prim in those days.'

'I had almost forgotten,' he said, as if labouring under nightmare—'almost forgotten.'

'Men find it easy. But d'ye think there's been a day I've not remembered? I listened to the fool-things you told me—and, if nothing happened afterwards to shout our news abroad, it wasn't your fault. It was just your luck.'

The past recoiled on Elliot. It was strong to bite, after its years of sleep. 'I had almost forgotten,' he said, with childish reiteration.

'After that you married, and watched your daughter grow. There never had been such a lass in the world before, you fancied. Then she came to me with her trouble, and I helped her through. I only half believed her tale of marriage, but I went with her over the tops to her child-birth. I'd a liking for the girl, if only because she'd thwarted your mucky pride—same as if you stood up in a starched, white shirt, and me your unpaid laundry-maid.'

'You always had a crisp tongue, Eliza,' he said, feeling for the sticks he had forgotten and cast aside in these days of new-born hope.

'It grows crisper as time jogs on. It has need to, I reckon. I was telling how your daughter went with me over the moor that night. What sort of child *could* be born at the end of such a scamper—the wind yelping at us, and the rain swishing through us like a mill-sludge?'

Elliot had turned to Wee Daunt with such merciless contempt in his glance that the little man took fire.

'I own Storrieth,' he said bluntly, 'whatever shape I carry. And I'm healthy as a bullock—not wizened and downbroken by rheumatics.'

'He's right,' laughed Eliza. 'For weeks after he was born, I made sure I'd never rear him—what with his mother dead, and his sickness, and the cruel weather. But there happened to be a young farm-wife near who'd lost her child. She suckled the lad as if he'd been her own, and he won through, till now he's strong as the best of them.'

'So it seems,' said Elliot, with a touch of icy humour. 'Will you tell me why you asked for two days before you brought my—my grandson? He was no farther away than your cottage.'

'I'll tell you that, too. I wanted you to have your fill of dreams,

knowing how they'd go—wanted the waking to be salt and bitter for you, Stephen Elliot, as if you'd blundered into a deepish sort of marsh.'

He felt for his sticks again with twisted, fumbling hands. Then he recaptured the strength that would not be denied. Hope of an heir to his liking had gone, but not his lust to humble Roger Scroope. It would have gone hard with Scroope to lose house and lands to any man—but it would mean gall and wormwood to be supplanted by this shock-headed dwarf.

It was Wee Daunt who interrupted the brooding silence. An odd dignity was striving to win through his uncouthness. Through his long vigils on the moor, his face turned steadfastly to Storrieth's clustered roofs, the years had mellowed him for ownership. When Eliza had told him, two days since, what his rights were, he had been bewildered. A headlong storm of joy had followed, that he was his true self at last. For two whole days he had thought round and about this turn of fortune, in his own silent way; and now he spoke.

'You quarrel about some bygone thing that's in its grave, or should be—and you're looking sideways at me as if I was still Wee Daunt, with few clothes to my back. But I'm Scroope of Storrieth.'

Eliza Daunt glanced at Elliot, and he at her. Out of the clouded yesterdays they had brought this man to his own. She had pictured him tied to her apron strings, while she ruled at Storrieth. And Elliot had thought of him only as a misshapen lout who would be the moorside's jest, and the bane of Roger Scroope.

Both were aware of the change in Wee Daunt. They had thrown a stone into a deep pool, and already watched the waters circle out into a beyond that seemed to have no end.

*(To be continued.)*

## MAKIK

## A SOLDIER IN THE DESERT.

BY MAJOR HUBERT YOUNG, C.M.G., D.S.O.

## II.

I was fully occupied during the next few days in organising the seventy-mile line of communication from Akaba to Aba'l Lissan, and working out a plan for the great raid. I took over my duties as head of the Q section of Joyce's staff at the beginning of July, and by the 22nd had prepared a detailed scheme, which was approved by Joyce and Feisal and sent to Akaba to be posted to General Allenby at G.H.Q. This scheme provided for the arrival at Azraq some time in October of a flying column of all arms which would be liberally supplied with rations and ammunition. These supplies were to be replenished by regular convoys once every ten days, and the idea was that the column, which would have a ten days' radius of action from its desert base, would be able to cut the main trunk railway between Deraa and Damascus and keep it cut for an indefinite period.

I mopped my brow as soon as I had got this off, and turned with renewed vigour to my struggles with Ali Bey. I was rather pleased with my scheme, which seemed quite water-tight and likely to lead to great things. But I was to suffer one or two rude shocks. Actually while the scheme was being prepared, and before it was sent off, a telegram came from 'Hedgehog' announcing that there was to be a stunt. There were, in fact, to be two stunts. A detachment of the Imperial Camel Corps, a British unit of General Allenby's Army, was to march across to Akaba from Beersheba and to attack the station of Mudawwara, sixty-five miles south of Maan. It was then to march to Jafar and Bair and make descents upon the line north of Maan. Joyce had been committed to putting out dumps of forage and rations for them at Rum, on the way to Mudawwara, and at Jafar and Bair. Had he not over two thousand camels at his disposal, and could not almost unlimited convoy work be done with these useful animals?

Joyce and I were in despair. We sent an urgent telegram accepting the Mudawwara stunt, but urging strongly that the other should be given up. It would delay the great raid by four weeks, and, even if successful, it would not achieve anything like so valuable a result as that anticipated from the scheme which was actually in



the post. A reply came that it was not intended that stunt number two should delay or interfere with the main autumn operation, which remained essentially the first consideration. It was thought that stunt number two, following closely upon stunt number one, would be of the utmost value. If the provision of camelmen was the difficulty it was suggested that the personnel of Peake's Egyptian Camel Corps, supplemented by Lawrence's braves, would meet the case. Lawrence himself would be flown over in a day or two, if possible, to make everything right. Joyce and I discussed this telegram with some grinding of teeth, and decided that there was nothing for it but to use some of the priceless camels to put out a dump for stunt number one, and to await further comments when our scheme had been digested at G.H.Q.

Meanwhile Lawrence flew over and explained, what could not have been said in the telegram, that General Allenby was already preparing for his great advance, which was timed to take place at the beginning of October. All idea of prolonged operations by the Arab flying column was thus out of the question. What was wanted was a swift and sudden blow with the object of cutting the Turkish communications in the first week of October, just before Allenby's attack. This put a different complexion on the matter, though it did not explain why Joyce had been saddled with the I.C.C. without having been consulted. He did not agree with Lawrence that their descent upon Akaba would be a good thing. They were not to be attached to the Arabs, and it was doubtful whether the sudden incursion of a British unit under British command would be welcomed. My point of view was purely arithmetical. Each camel load given to Buxton was a camel load taken from our own flying column, and we wanted all we could get. Relations between Lawrence and ourselves became for the moment a trifle strained, and the sight of the little man reading the 'Morte d'Arthur' in a corner of the mess-tent with an impish smile on his face was not consoling. But we had to play up, as Buxton was already on his way from Beersheba, and when his splendid army arrived at Akaba we forgot all about our grievances. They had a most successful action at Mudawwara on August 8th, taking the station and inflicting over 150 casualties. Stunt number two was, however, unfruitful, and they padded silently back to Beersheba a few days later, having no doubt given a useful object-lesson to the Arabs.

But, alas! they had used up a large number of camel loads which were wanted for dumps for the flying column, and hardly had they disappeared when we got another fearful shock. On

August 19th Joyce was told that General Allenby's move had been put forward by two or three weeks, and that if the great raid was to be of any use it must take place not later than September 16th. It may be imagined what this would have meant even to a properly constituted Q department with a full staff. What it meant to us was really beyond description. We had already modified our original plan to some extent, and had given up all that part of the scheme which provided for a prolonged operation based on Azraq. But there was still a great deal to be done in the way of putting out dumps of forage and petrol merely to enable the column to reach Azraq at all. This last blow nearly made the whole plan impossible. In order to strike on September 16th, two convoys of six hundred baggage camels each had to be started off from Akaba, one on August 26th and the other on the 28th, with all the materials for the expedition. These had to be loaded with carefully calculated loads of water for men, water for mules, forage, British rations, French rations, Arab rations, Egyptian rations, and Gurkha rations; ammunition for rifles, machine-guns, and two different kinds of quick-firing gun; explosives, bivouac tents, petrol for the armoured cars and aeroplanes, and hospital equipment. It is almost true to say that either I or one of my British officers personally supervised every single load, so vital was it that nothing should go wrong.

From August 19th to the 22nd I was at Akaba, calculating loads, checking the masses of equipment which came in daily from Cairo, organising the camelmen, and sending desperate telegrams for things which had been forgotten. It is not cool at Akaba in August, and we used to bathe two or three times a day in the blue waters of the Gulf. The place was one seething, snarling, sweating mass of camels and Arabs, each as difficult as the other to control. But somehow or other the loads were all arranged, and on the 23rd I could rush up again to Aba'l Lissan to make final arrangements for the redistribution. Here the problem was quite different. There were seven different authorities whose demands for transport had to be satisfied, the Sherifian Army, the attached British staff, the airmen, the armoured cars, Pisani's French gunners, the medical authorities, and the combined demolition party of Gurkhas and Egyptian Camel Corps. There is a limit even to what seven hundred and fifty camels can carry, especially if a twenty days' march is in prospect, and conflicting claims had to be very carefully adjusted.

When all was more or less arranged, down I rushed again in my trusty Ford to superintend the actual starting of Convoy No. 1 on the 26th. Everything was in full swing, when there was a sudden

loud explosion and cries of 'Taiyyara! Taiyyara!' Looking up I saw two German aeroplanes at an immense height, and, as I looked, down came another bomb. In a moment all was confusion, and much precious time was wasted in rounding up the terrified camelmen and disentangling the camel-ropes which they had let fall. Luckily no great harm was done, and the convoy struggled out of Akaba on its first stage of five or six miles without mishap. Only one thing was incomplete. The Bedouin camelmen, when they heard that they were to go miles out into the desert, insisted upon being given rifles and ammunition. For some reason these were not at the moment available, and I had to satisfy them with a solemn promise that they should not leave Aba'l Lissan without them. Now they were due to leave Aba'l Lissan with the reconstructed Convoy No. 1 on the 30th, on the day following that on which they were due to arrive there. It was clear, then, that the rifles, which formed ten camel loads, must be sent up on the following day if my promise was to be kept, and I must get the ten camels by hook or by crook out of the Sherifian authorities, as every one of my own was earmarked for other work.

Early next morning I visited Sheikh Yusuf, Feisal's representative at Akaba, and explained matters to him. Sheikh Yusuf greeted me hospitably in his stifling audience room. He professed to see no difficulty. The ten camels would be sent up at once with the rifles and ammunition. I went back to breakfast in the mess, but once bitten is twice shy, and an hour later I paid another visit to the Sheikh. The camels had not gone. Sheikh Yusuf was very sorry. As a matter of fact he had found it impossible to hire any camels. It was God's will. I saw the Sheikh watching me closely, and talked bravely about other matters. Very soon I rose to go—rather sooner than politeness demanded.

'I take leave,' I said casually. 'I have somewhat to do.'

The Sheikh was inquisitive. 'Doubtless some urgent matter?' he ventured.

'Nay, nay,' said I, 'a mere matter of a telegram.'

'A telegram? To whom?'

'Nay, it is of no moment, my brother.'

'But to whom, I beseech you?'

'To Allenby.'

'To Allenby? Allah, what sayest thou to Allenby?' inquired the Sheikh.

'Tis naught, O Sheikh. I do but ask him to delay the movement of 150,000 men for one day.'

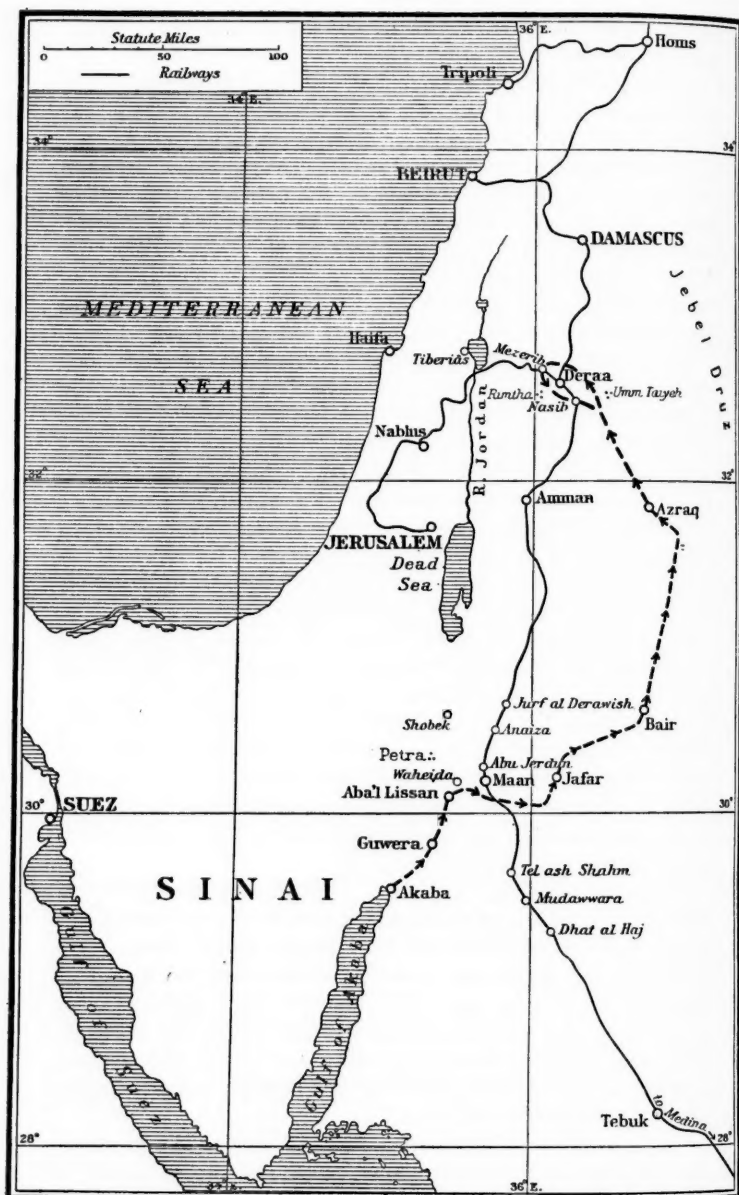
'To delay the movement?—150,000 men?—one day? What is this, my dear?'

'For Allenby it is easy,' I replied with some bitterness. 'His armies move as one man. His staff is highly trained. Walter Campbell will think nothing of it. It is, however, inevitable. His Highness Sidi Feisal has promised to make an attack upon a certain day, and if the convoy is delayed by one day the attack will be delayed by one day. If the camelmen have no rifles the convoy will be delayed, and if you cannot find me ten camels in one hour from now the camelmen will have no rifles. So Allenby must also wait one day,' and I turned to go. Before I had gone two steps I was clutched by the arm. The Sheikh was on his feet.

'But that will be shame,' he cried, 'shame on our Lord Feisal and the Arab nation. Thou shalt have them forthwith; by my beard I swear it.' And in less than the hour he produced them. But I was not yet out of the wood, for when I reached the tumbled maze of ropes and dung and sand, which was by courtesy the Sherifian camel-lines, I found that not a camelman would venture to take up so precious a freight without a guard. A small knot of sweaty allies collected in the blazing sun at the edge of the fringe of tattered palm-trees on the beach, and declined with varying degrees of emphasis to stir a finger. In vain I employed argument, cajolery, and even threats. 'We know thee not!' shouted a great black Meccan, thrusting himself forward as spokesman. 'We take orders only from our Lord, the Sherif.' For the first, and I think the last, time I lost control. I told them all at the top of my voice, in the most abusive Arabic I knew, what I thought of them, and finished up by spitting almost in the Meccan's face. Funnily enough, this did the trick. The others roared with laughter, hustled the discomfited black man away, and loaded up the camels without more ado.

Next day, the 28th, Convoy No. 2 left Akaba according to plan, and I jumped for the last time into the little Ford. As I crested the Negab I saw the tail of Convoy No. 1 turning into its camp among the limestone boulders, and in another minute I was back among my friends of three days ago. This was my first experience of an uncanny effect of moving backwards in time which was to become very familiar during the next fortnight, as I passed, and met, and repassed and met again the two long lines of weary beasts straggling across the featureless desert.

At Aba'l Lissan I found a certain liveliness, due to a proclamation in King Hussein's newspaper which had caused offence to



Ja'afar and his officers. The night before they had all resigned, but there was never any real fear that they would persist in this, and my arrangements were not interfered with. Both convoys had to be entirely reconstituted into two marching columns before they left Aba'l Lissan. Four hundred and twenty out of the twelve hundred camels had to be fitted out as riding camels with brand new saddles, bridles, and head-ropes, brought up for them as loads from Akaba. Then the Sherifian soldiers, honest cultivators for the most part from the lands which fringe the Arabian deserts, had to be introduced to their strange mounts. The air was full of gobblings and growlings, and I was kept very busy. I had to go very carefully into the number of camels to be allotted to each unit, as we were working with no margin of safety, and I only yielded to Pisani's very large demand for transport under great pressure. I was anxious about the camels' grain, as I could only give each beast three days' rations in a sand-bag, and had to rely on Feisal for fresh supplies at Bair and Azraq. At Jafar there was a remnant of the dump which I had put out for Buxton, whose splendidly regular army passed through Aba'l Lissan while we were in our worst throes, and filled us with envy and admiration.

The first column was escorted by a combined demolition party of Gurkhas and Egyptian Camel Corps, under Peake, and also had with it an advance party of Pisani's gunners under a sous-officier. It started punctually on August 30th, and had hardly disappeared when Convoy No. 2 arrived from Akaba. Getting the second column started was more difficult, as the Arab detachment was only just formed and the officers were a little peevish about King Hussein's proclamation. But it moved out of the camp on September 2nd, only one day late, eight hundred camels and seven hundred men strong.

Feisal drove out in his new Vauxhall car to review them as they picked their way daintily past him by two and by two among the limestone boulders which studded the broad grass track over the downs. They had picked up the formation and general style of the Imperial Camel Corps, and I could not help contrasting their business-like ranks with the untidy horde of raggle-taggle gipsies which would have been straggling past if it had not been for our labours. As each section saluted Feisal I even felt an absurd lump in my bearded throat at the greatness of the sight. Then I climbed into a Rolls tender and dashed off on my last series of shuttles.

The two great caravans of six and eight hundred laden camels were now pacing steadily northwards, like the children of Israel, on

their three-hundred-mile march across the gravel desert. They were ninety miles apart, and would neither see nor hear anything of each other until they met again at the reedy pools and dry mud-flats which lie about the ruined castle at Azraq. Utter silence encompassed them. Away on their left flank, far out of sight and sound, the little Turkish trains crawled to and fro on their toy railway line, busy and unsuspecting, while they themselves saw no living thing. As my stout car ate up in three short hours the three days' weary march which lay between them, I wondered whether I should find at Bair and Azraq the grain which Feisal and Lawrence had promised should be there, and what would happen if they failed me. But I did not rely too much upon their promises, for at the back of my mind was a serene confidence in the God of the Semites, who would surely not allow the two great hosts to perish by the way.

Peake and his column had left Jafar when I got there, but my barley dump was in good order, and the local sheikh, Oda abu Tayi, assured me that there had been no difficulty. Seeing that all was well, I went straight on to Bair, which I reached just as it was getting dark. Here there was no sign of life, and not a grain of barley. I could not be sure of meeting Peake, as the cars did not follow the same track as the camels, so I left a message for him with one of Oda's men, whom I had luckily brought with me, and dashed back to Jafar to see Oda himself. He told me that the barley for Bair had just been dumped at Jafar by mistake, but promised to send it on at once by Bedouin caravan. This could not, of course, catch up Peake's column in time, but it might save him from going for more than one day without rations. After my experience with Sheikh Yusuf at Akaba I was not going to stir from Jafar until I saw a caravan actually starting, and this did not happen until well after midday on September 4th. By that time Peake was riding into Bair, and I had only just time to catch him up in the car and warn him before nightfall.

As I climbed stiffly out of the car by the Bair waterhole, Peake came forward to meet me.

'Everyone is giving trouble,' he said, 'except my own men. The Gurkhas have got some grouse against their jemadar which I can't understand, the Algerians are fighting each other, and the Sherifian camelmén say that if they get no barley the camels will die and they themselves will come to an awful end.'

But things were not as bad as they sounded. The Gurkhas were soon laughed into a good temper, and the French sous-officier of the Algerian detachment managed to restore order as soon as he got a



little more support. The barley was the real difficulty. Suddenly my eye fell on some bulging sacks among the Algerian loads.

'What is that?' I asked.

'Barley for our mules,' said the sous-officier.

'How many loads?'

'Thirty loads.'

Thirty loads, why, that was twenty loads too many. Six thousand pounds of barley. Ten pounds a camel for the whole convoy. Blessings on Pisani and his acquisitiveness! I impounded the twenty loads forthwith, in spite of the terrified protests of the sous-officier, and the day was saved.

After all this I was not surprised to find next evening on arriving at Azraq, a hundred and twenty miles farther on, that there was no sign of life there either and not a grain of barley, though I had been promised five hundred loads. I had been joined at Bair by an advance party of R.A.F. and armoured car personnel in Crossley and Rolls tenders, and I should have liked to stay with them at this lodge in the wilderness, sending my own Rolls tender back with a message for Joyce. But I was nervous by now of sending messages, and decided to go with it. I left the advance party putting up the hangar and started on my last journey of two hundred and forty miles to Aba'l Lissan. On the way I met a Druze caravan returning to their home in the Jebel, north-east of Deraa, and found that it was on its way to fetch the promised barley for Azraq. Resisting with some difficulty the temptation to go officiously with them and see that they really did it, I continued my journey, and just outside Bair came upon Peake's column safely started on its last lap with the barley which had been brought on by the Howeytat caravan from Jafar.

I decided to wait at Bair until Nuri and the detachment arrived, so that I might be sure that all was well with them too. They arrived well up to time and none the worse for their five days' march, though camels and riders were both a little chafed by unfamiliar contact. I was talking to a group of Arab officers and chaffing them about the completeness of their preparations when a small, bearded figure in neat French khaki, with braided cap and three rows of medal ribbons, burst suddenly into the circle. It was Pisani, almost speechless with fury, and waving a small piece of paper in his hand.

'My sous-officier reports,' he said in a trembling voice, 'that twenty loads of barley were taken from my advance detachment at this place.'

'Yes,' said I.

'By whose orders?'

'By mine,' said I.

'By your orders? By your orders?' And the little man turned and took five short paces in the hope of mastering his emotion. Turning round and pacing back he confronted me again. 'You took my barley?' he cried, and cast his braided cap upon the ground.

I could only nod.

'You took my barley? and you call yourself a Commandant?' and he ground the cap into the dust with his heel. Walking away once more, he came back for the last time. He was actually tearing hairs from the small, wiry tuft on his chin, a thing I have never seen done before or since. 'I shall report you to G.H.Q.,' he said excitedly. 'Commandant or no, you have no right to take my barley. I am responsible for my mules and for my detachment. You have no right to interfere.' And he picked up his cap and walked away.

Poor Pisani had a perfect right to protest, but it was unfortunate that he had chosen to make a scene in front of the Arabs. Joyce and his staff had always been most careful to discourage any tendency to decry and grumble at the French detachment. It had done wonderful work, and was worth two of any of the Arab batteries, but it was the fashion in Arab circles to minimise the help it gave for political reasons. Pisani's position was thus a difficult one, and it was doubly unfortunate that it should happen to be he who had got excited. I followed him at once and did my best to pacify him, but it was quite useless, and I could only hope that we should be able to make it up later on. The rest of Nuri's column was in splendid order, and when I reached Aba'l Lissan for the last time on September 7th Joyce was delighted to hear that all was going so well. I found that Lawrence and Winterton had left for Azraq in another Rolls tender, taking with them Sherif Nasir, who was to represent Feisal with the flying column. Four days later Joyce and Stirling and I followed them, and by September 13th the whole force was collected at Azraq.

Partly to stop the Turks at Amman reinforcing Deraa, and partly in the hope of mystifying them and taking their attention off the place where the line was to be cut in earnest, we decided to start work on the 14th or 15th by breaking the line south of Deraa. With some difficulty we induced the Arabs to leave this to Peake's combined demolition party of Egyptians and Gurkhas, as we did not want to risk another fiasco like Abu Jerdun, where the Sherifian

demolition party reported a break which had not, in fact, been made. Peake was given two armoured cars to escort him, as no guns could be spared, and marched off on the afternoon of the 13th. The main body started at dawn next day, and marched steadily northwards for about twenty miles, halting for the night in a grassy valley where the camels found good grazing. Now that the British officers were collected, there was not room for all to ride in the tenders which had brought them by relays to Azraq. Foreseeing this, I had been careful to pick out the best of Allenby's two thousand camels for my own use, and had sent my servant with it. I also borrowed a mule from one of the Sherifian pack batteries, so that I could move easily over any ground. In the rough lava-strewn country which lies on the east of the railway between Azraq and Deraa I rode the mule myself and put my kit and servant on the camel, but when the going was good we changed places.

We marched again at dawn through a nightmare country of black lava where the camels slipped and grunted, and the Rolls tenders went through strains which even their designers had not foreseen. I rode that day with Pisani, who had quite recovered from his annoyance about the barley, and beguiled the way with stories of his campaigns in Africa. Towards midday Peake rejoined the force, with a disappointing tale. Unfortunately no one had realised that at this great distance from Aba'l Lissan, where not even a Sherifian force had yet been seen, the little force of Gurkhas and Egyptians, escorted by armoured cars and preceded by Peake's fair beard and Scott Higgins' really terrifying black whiskers, would need some explaining. As they neared the line, which they struck at a point some miles south of their objective, they ran into a large encampment of local Bedouin, who were paid by the Turks to protect the line. This would not have mattered if Lawrence or Feisal, or even Sherif Nasir, had been with them, since Bedouin allegiance was easily transferred as circumstances might dictate. But Peake had no political officer with him, and it was in vain that he described the imposing array moving slowly towards Deraa. He was not believed, and all he could do was to extract a promise of secrecy before he rode away. When Lawrence joined us that night, having ridden independently with his bodyguard from Azraq, and heard what had happened, he was very angry. It did not matter so much that the Arabs were inclined to blame us for not letting them do the thing themselves, or that he had omitted to send anyone with Peake. What mattered was that the thing had not been done. The force was now encamped at Umm Taiyeh, some fifteen miles

south-east of Deraa, and to-morrow was the first of the three days set by General Allenby for a diversion near Deraa. Two days later his own great advance would begin, so that there was no time to lose. Somewhere, somehow, Deraa must be cut off from the south to-morrow if it was to be successfully cut off from the north and the west next day. The slow-moving main body of the Arab force had still twenty miles to go to reach the point on the Damascus line, which was its first objective. It must be at full strength for this, and could not afford to leave a detachment behind for other work. Not even the bodyguard could now move fast enough to cut the southern line and catch up the main body astride the northern line at dawn next day.

Lawrence's quick mind seized these points at once, and by the time the British and Arab officers met next morning he had his plan ready. He must do it himself. Let him have a tender and a machine-gun and he would run down to the line and do in a bridge. There was quite a good one at kilometre so-and-so, with a covered approach down the wadi which the car ought to manage. There was only a small post on the bridge, and with luck he ought to be able to do the job before the Turks realised what was happening. It would be rather amusing. To one at least of his hearers it did not sound at all amusing; it sounded quite mad. But this was again the Lawrence whose madness had taken Akaba, and his madness on this occasion cut the Deraa-Amman line. Escorted by two armoured cars, and accompanied by Joyce and Winterton, he drove off that afternoon in the open tender, crammed to the gunwale with gun-cotton and detonators. While the machine-guns of the escort scattered the small Turkish post, the tender was driven right down to the bridge, where Lawrence laid and fired his charge. Then the small gay figure bumped airily away, perched high on the deadly boxes which any chance shot might blow into a thousand pieces.

Meanwhile the main column moved steadily northwards, guarded on its left flank by a screen of mounted Bedouin, who could be relied upon to come flying back and give timely warning of any Turkish move. As they neared Deraa, which was in full sight on the left front, I tried to forget that we were absolutely in the air, with no line of communications and no possible way of getting back. Comforting myself with the thought that Jeb Stuart's supply officer must often have felt as I did, I dug my heels into my mule and cantered on to join Nuri at the head of the column. Nuri was good company at all times, but he was at his best at a

time like this. His great joke was to offer us what he and his brother officers of the Arab Army called 'calories.' These were draughts of a yellow liquid which, to the infidel, smelt and tasted like whisky, but which was by courtesy referred to only as a food-value. As we rode along Nuri suddenly pointed to the clouds which hung low over distant Deraa. Tiny specks could be seen wheeling and circling above the town, while an occasional thud and pillar of white smoke rising from the ground showed that it was being heavily bombed. It was strange to think that these machines had only left Ramleh an hour or so earlier and that their occupants would be back in Palestine before another two hours had passed. Punctuality at the rendezvous was for them a matter of minutes; for us it had been a matter of exactly three weeks.

Just before nightfall we crossed the embankment on which before the war had run a light railway from Deraa to Bosrah eski Sham. We bivouacked in the open, four or five miles from our objective, and advanced at dawn against the long straight stretch of line which lay to the east of Tel Arar. The hill itself was a rocky outcrop only three miles north of Deraa and a few hundred yards west of the line. If we could take and hold it we should have a perfect covering position, behind which Peake and his merry men could work havoc undisturbed. But the line must be crossed first, and this meant clearing out a Turkish post of about twenty men who were entrenched on the other side. The Bedouin horse asked to be allowed to do this, and were sent off by Sherif Nasir with orders to do it quickly and report to Nuri. I was with Nuri when the report came in, and suggested that we should run down in a Ford van and be the first regulars to stand on the main Turkish line of communications a hundred miles behind the Turkish front. Nuri jumped at the idea, and we rattled over the stony plough well ahead of the infantry, who were advancing to cross the line and take up a position on Tel Arar. Running the car to the foot of the embankment we clambered up and struck attitudes in true Arab style on the middle of the permanent way. Three or four Bedouin horsemen cantered on with us to see if there were any pickings left in the captured post, and rode gaily over the line towards the barbed wire, while Nuri and I drank a festsal calorie. Suddenly there were loud exclamations, and the brave cavalry came flying back on top of us. Behind them a stout Turkish officer or N.C.O. sallied bravely forth in a long white night-shirt at the head of his men, brandishing what looked like a sword. At the same time a little crackle of musketry came from the sand-

bags, which were only eighty yards away. It would be hard to say which of the two regulars looked more foolish. 'Come on,' said Nuri, drawing his revolver. 'I'm damned if I do,' said I, not having one, and pulled him down behind the embankment, where we hopped into the waiting Ford and rattled back again. It turned out that the Bedouin horse had never attacked the post at all, and precious time was lost while one of the French guns was brought up and the post silenced. Owing to this it was not till nearly ten o'clock that Tel Arar was occupied and the demolition begun.

Lawrence and Joyce had by this time got back from their adventure south of Deraa, and the British and Arab staff collected on the top of the hill to see what was happening. Deraa was just waking up to the fact that something was going on. The cutting of all the wires from Damascus and the sound of Pisani's guns showed that this was more than an Arab raid, though what it actually was no one in Deraa could understand. When the town was entered by British and Arab troops eleven days later, copies of Turkish reports and orders were found which showed how mystified the enemy had been. One of these reports said that Sherif Feisal was advancing on Deraa with a force of eighteen thousand men, while another contradicted this and said that there was no cause for alarm, as Feisal was three hundred miles away. But whether it was Feisal or someone else there could be no harm in an air reconnaissance, and as the recent bombardment had not done any real damage, owing to the clouds, it was not long before a machine got up and sailed over Tel Arar. Every man in the force had a shot at it, and the French guns were up-ended in the hope of a hit, but it got back safely and gave the news that thousands of men and camels were swarming over the line. The result was that all the planes in Deraa, and there were eight of them, came out with bombs and machine-guns. Excitement now became practically continuous, as the aerodrome was not more than three or four miles away and ammunition could be replenished in a few minutes. The sight of the enemy machines reminded me that the Hejaz flight from Azraq was due to send machines over, and that they might turn up at any moment. As a matter of fact, one of the two had been disabled. But I did not know this, and as soon as I had got my camel safely barracked I set about clearing a landing space on the best bit of ground I could find. This was a narrow strip of plough between the hill and the railway, plentifully strewn with large boulders, any one of which would wreck an under-carriage. My working party was only about thirty strong, and we would have our work cut out to clear enough space for a machine to land in.

While we did our best to roll away the boulders, Peake and his demolition party were working steadily up the line. The rest of the force had disappeared as if by magic, Sherifians and Bedouin alike seeming to know by instinct what to do when attacked from the air. Neither had been trained or warned in any way, but they just scattered and then sat stolidly by their barracked camels, having obviously made up their minds that running away would do no good. I tried to convince myself that they were right, but could not help wondering all the time whether a short run would not be helpful. Each time I came back for a fresh boulder I looked furtively up to see whether the latest plane was coming quite squarely at me or not. If it was, I almost unconsciously moved aside in the hope of catching sight of the end of one wing and proving to myself that I was not in the direct line.

Whether as a result of these and similar movements, or for some other reason, I was untouched by bomb or bullet, as were all but two of the Arab force and one of the camels, though the bombardment lasted for over an hour. It ended as suddenly as it had begun. The remaining machine of the Hejaz flight, a B.E. 12, piloted by Junor, came unconcernedly over at the appointed time. Finding the air unexpectedly crowded, he made off, and the enemy planes luckily followed him. Peake had by this time got almost out of sight up the line, and it seemed a good opportunity for a fresh move. Nuri, with half the force, slipped away over the downs towards Mezerib to cut the Deraa-Palestine railway, leaving the rest of the detachment on Tel Arar, in case the Deraa garrison plucked up courage and came out after all. No one told me this, but I gathered that something was up when my working party suddenly disappeared in the infuriating way to which I had not yet grown accustomed. No Arab officer ever thought of telling the British adviser concerned when he marched away his troops. They would quite cheerfully have left a solitary British officer marooned on a mud-flat in the heart of the desert, not meaning any harm, but simply because they did not feel called upon to announce that they were going away.

On this occasion I managed to get a few men out of Pisani to finish up my clearing, and had almost got it done with the help of one or two British officers, when Junor came back. Three enemy planes were on his tail, and he dropped a message to say that he must land as he had no more petrol. All hands now rushed to the improvised aerodrome, though it was too late to do much more. It was rather horrible to watch the young pilot in his old machine dodging and turning to escape his three grim enemies. As he was



driven lower and lower I realised with a start that he was actually fighting for his life and that we were powerless to help him. We could only put out the landing signal in the best possible place and leave the rest to fate. Just at this moment the wind veered, and the narrow strip of stony ground which we had cleared to give as long a run up-wind as possible, no longer lay in the right direction for landing. Junor landed well in the fairway, and for a moment it seemed as if all were well. Then a puff of the fickle wind got under his machine and turned it into the stones, where it capsized. He dropped out unhurt; but the machine was wrecked, and the gallant Hejaz flight ceased from that moment to exist. All the British officers ran to the wreck and helped him to carry off his machine-gun and ammunition, while his three pursuers roared down one after the other to two or three hundred feet and spat impotently at the little group. I whistled up one of the Fords, and we all bundled off in it just as a bomb fell where we had been standing. Junor at once mounted his machine-gun in the Ford and dashed off with Kirkbride towards Deraa in the hope of winging one of his tormentors when they next came out, and I went to find my camel, having got Joyce's leave to join the Mezerib party, of which I had only just heard.

The camel took some finding, as I had almost buried it between two huge boulders on the east of the line, and could not remember where it was. When I at last unearthed it I found myself strangely alone. Far away to the north an occasional puff of smoke showed where Peake was pursuing his work of destruction. In the other direction Deraa lay twinkling in the mirage, but gave no sign of life. On Tel Arar a few figures showed up against the rocky out-crop where Joyce and Stirling kept watch with what remained of the detachment. Everything and everyone else had vanished. I mounted my beast and forced it over the embankment at the spot where Nuri and I had been surprised earlier in the day. Mezerib lay some five miles along the western railway, which dived a little farther on into the Yarmuk gorge. I had never been there, but I knew its general direction and made sure of finding Nuri somehow. I had no idea how far ahead he and his detachment were, but they would certainly have to halt and water their animals, and I knew from the map that there was a large pool at Mezerib. As I rode over the stubbly downs which stretched away westward from Tel Arar, I wondered what I should do if I ran into an enemy patrol. I had a Webley in my saddle-bag and pulled it out to see that it was loaded, though I had not much confidence in my ability to use it

from camel-back. Every few moments I looked up nervously to see whether one of the Deraa planes was following me, but they, too, had vanished, and I felt very lonely. Suddenly I saw a riderless camel standing pitifully on three legs, the fourth a spongy stump from which blood poured slowly. Its saddle and bridle had been carried away, but it did not look like one of the two thousand, and I supposed it to be one of Lawrence's. It looked quite happy, but to save it from a lingering death I shot it through the head with my Webley. A red spot sprang out on its cheek-bone, showing that I had not missed, but the patient beast merely looked round at me and went on chewing. At a second shot it shuddered and fell suddenly as a tree falls.

There were two railway stations at Mezerib, one of which was the junction between the Deraa-Palestine line and a dismantled French line from Damascus which ran parallel to and only a few miles away from the Hejaz railway. The other station was on this French line, about half a mile from the junction, and here I found Nuri and his detachment on the point of attacking the junction. It was a great comfort to be with friends once more, and the fact that Lawrence and I were the only two British officers with the force, and that we were now actually inside the Turkish lines, did not worry me. Joyce and Stirling would hang on at Tel Arar to keep a crossing open for us to get back by, and so long as we suffered no reverse there was no fear of the local peasants turning against us. Mezerib junction was held by a small Turkish force which was not going to give in without showing fight. It had not yet been reinforced from Deraa or from the Yarmuk direction, but the Palestine line and telegraph were intact, and at any moment a train full of troops with guns might come along and make things awkward. Nuri lost no time in bringing up his guns and sending his regulars at the station, and in half an hour it was taken. An orgy of looting followed, in which Arab regular and irregular alike fell upon a supply train, which stood in a siding, and devoted themselves to filling their pockets and bellies. We two British officers were left to do what we could to snatch some permanent advantage from our rather precarious position. The first thing was to destroy the telegraph, so we climbed on to the station roof and, reaching out for the thick wires, cut them one by one. As the last wire parted we felt that we had completed the mystification of the Turkish G.H.Q. in Palestine. Wild stories of Feisal and his eighteen thousand men had no doubt been flashing along those very wires since the morning, and might even be passing at the moment.

It was odd to stand looking out over the peaceful landscape, in which there was no movement of man or beast, and to think of the consternation which the closing of those nippers must have caused in distant Nablus; but there was no time to waste. The next job was to damage the railway lines and points, and Lawrence took the points while I moved a few hundred yards up the line towards Deraa, with two of the bodyguard, to plant what we called 'tulips,' small charges of gun-cotton, under the metal sleepers. I had planted half a dozen when something made me look along the line towards Deraa, and my heart stood still, for a train was crawling slowly out of the town towards Mezerib. My first thought was to warn Lawrence, who was now almost alone in the station, Nuri having collected and marched off his detachment out of reach of the line. Rushing back at top speed I shouted breathlessly that a train was coming.

'A plane?' said Lawrence. 'Oh, yes—that will do no harm!'

'Not a plane, you damned fool,' I roared, 'a train.'

Lawrence did not turn a hair. 'I suppose we'd better light our charges, then,' he said. 'I will do yours, if you like.'

But I was already running back, fumbling for my fuses. A fuse will not light from the flame of a match; it needs a glowing end to set it off, and I felt feverishly in one pocket after another as I pounded along the metals, but could not find the precious box. I was pouring with sweat and thoroughly uncomfortable by the time I got back to my two helpers. Neither of them had fuses, but one had matches, with which I lit a cigarette. Then began a hunt for the projecting ends of the buried fuses, which hid themselves obstinately under the metal sleepers. As each tulip was somewhere in the middle of a ten-metre rail, I had to cover another fifty or sixty yards before I reached the farthest fuse. Meanwhile the train was slowly crawling on, and there was not much time to spare. One last dab with the glowing cigarette, and I rushed to my camel, which was placidly chewing the cud a few yards from the line. Vaulting into the saddle I appealed to it with hoarse cries and severe blows. It rose at once to its feet but was hardly up before it stumbled and nearly fell, and I realised to my horror that I had forgotten to unhobble it. As the train was now quite close, and it was also about time for some of the tulips to go off, I could only throw myself off over its neck and run for my life. One of the bodyguard cantered by, leading a spare camel which had been grazing and which he had been sent to round up. I shouted to him hoarsely to give me a lift, but the fellow called back

that the camel belonged to Lawrence and could not be spared. Cursing in my head I ran on towards the French station, expecting at any moment to be drawn and quartered. It never struck me that the most the Turks could do would be to fire a few rounds in my direction. They did not, in fact, do anything at all, for just then my tulips sprouted, and so did Lawrence's, and the train thought it wise to shunt back into Deraa.

I went back and caught my three-legged camel, and Lawrence and I touched off the rest of our fuses. Then we rode on to join Nuri's column, which had halted about a mile west of the two Mezeribs, where there was good water and grazing. It was now evening, and everyone was tired and hungry. No definite plan had been made when the detachment left Tel Arar, but Lawrence had always hoped for a second opportunity of blowing up the great railway bridge at Tel ash Shehab, five miles west of Mezerib. The question was how to set about it. The approach to the bridge was covered by the village of Shehab, which was strongly placed on an outcrop of rock and could not easily be taken. On the bridge itself was a Turkish guard, which had been strengthened since Lawrence's unsuccessful attempt a year ago. Pisani's guns would be useless at night, and the tiny force of Sherifian regulars, gallant though they were, had not enough discipline or training for a night attack. Nuri was of course quite ready to try it. Lawrence was doubtful, and I was quite definitely against it. While we sat discussing what to do, the young sheikh of Shehab village appeared. He told us that the Armenian commander of the bridge guard was prepared to betray his post, and offered to fetch him, so that we could work out some plan together. At this stage of the proceedings I fell asleep, and when I woke up, at about ten o'clock, I found that the column was on the move. It appeared that the Armenian had produced a wonderful plan. He was quite ready to turn traitor himself, but was not at all sure about his non-commissioned subordinates. In order to get them out of the way, half a dozen strong men from the Sherifian detachment were to be hidden in his house, and the subordinates were to be sent for one by one. As each came in he was to be knocked on the head, after which the bridge was to be occupied and blown up. For some reason which was not quite clear, the whole Sherifian detachment was to join in, guns and camels and all, and it was the noise of saddling-up which had woken me. I did not think much of the scheme when I heard it, as it seemed to me an unsound attempt to combine regular with irregular work. I was still rather hide-bound, and

it shocked me to have melodrama brought in to reinforce military operations; but I said nothing, as the column was actually starting. Finding my way to its head, I joined Nuri and Lawrence, who were waiting dismounted a few hundred yards from the village for a guide to come out and conduct the six desperadoes to the Armenian's lodging. I did not actually see the chosen six, and never knew if they were to be regulars or irregulars; but as it turned out they were not wanted, for while we sat waiting there we heard an engine puffing heavily up the steep gradient on our left. It came to a standstill just below us, and sounds of booted feet and hoarse words of command came up to us through the night mist. We sat perfectly still, and in a few minutes the young sheikh came back to say that Turkish and German reinforcements had just arrived, the Armenian was no longer in command, and the melodrama could not take place. I heard this with some relief, as I had been getting very nervous, and did my best to discourage a whispered proposal from Nuri to attack the Germans with the bayonet. I had no stomach for this, as I was quite certain that the Arabs were not up to it, and thought it a pity for us to risk throwing everything away when we had been so successful.

In the end the detachment crawled back to Mezerib and waited there for the rest of the column, which was following us from Tel Arar, but without the armoured cars or Peake's demolition party, who went straight back to our old rendezvous at Umm Taiyeh. Next day we marched across south of Deraa past the big village of Rimtha, whose inhabitants came out and stood suspiciously with rifle in hand to watch us go by. As night fell we blew up the big bridge near Nasib station on the Deraa-Amman line, and thus completed the work Lawrence had begun two days before. Then we crossed the line and rejoined Joyce and Stirling at dawn on September 19th, having ridden right round Deraa and cut all three railway lines which radiated from it.

Peake's demolition, which was the most important of the three, had been successful beyond all hopes. He had put five continuous miles of the main Damascus-Deraa railway and telegraph lines so completely out of action that they were not repaired for nine days. It was not until September 26th, only two days before Deraa itself was entered by the British and Arab forces, that a solitary train got through from Damascus, and on the following day the same line was again cut by the Sherifian detachment. The result was that during the whole of Allenby's great advance the Turks were fighting without any hope of reinforcement or supply.

# ANTHONY TROLLOPE AND HIS MOTHER.

BY ROWLAND GREY.

THERE was once upon a time a Countess of Morley capable of writing a really warm letter of appreciation to Jane Austen, in the day of her purblind contemporaries. This same lady said to Mrs. Trollope: 'If you came to London you would have the horses taken out and be drawn in triumph from one end of the town to the other,' a circumstance which for us somewhat discounts her critical acumen.

For we have forgotten Mrs. Trollope of the hundred books, save as mother of a son whose star is in the ascendant. Yet at a moment when new biographies and new editions of his work testify that Anthony Trollope is coming to his own, the share of his mother in his making becomes of real interest. In point of fact he owed her so much, that if it is pardonable to ignore her prolific output, it is inexcusable to ignore the woman of rare parts, an embodiment of Henley's 'unconquerable soul,' and withal a laughing philosopher.

She was born in 1780, in 1863 she died. Did ever another woman 'commence author' at fifty-two and produce over a hundred books? Did any other best-seller pour out novel after novel with a worthier purpose, the purpose of maintaining and educating the large family she loved with complete unselfishness? Finally, did ever another mother-in-law find an admiring biographer in a devoted daughter-in-law? Hampered with a husband whose intolerable temper foredoomed him to failure in his undertakings, cursed moreover with a sort of dull persistency in that he could not do; this indomitable wife sat down cheerfully to her desk at four in the morning and had ended the first phase of her arduous day before other folks were awake. From breakfast time she consecrated herself wholly to those children for whom her affection gave sweetness to her labour. The income from her flying pen soon yielded six hundred a year, the very sum averaged by her far more gifted son.

'Mrs. Trollope was personally exempt from vulgarity though she knew her forte lay in depicting it,' says her biographer; she is easily forgiven her legion of literary crimes, when that blameless

life is recalled. She can afford to be despised by the high-brow peering contemptuously into the dusty pages of 'Petticoat Government,' 'The Blue Belles of England,' or other volumes evincing an aptitude for the kind of title making her the idol of the circulating libraries she certainly was.

In that essentially human document, the autobiography of her son Anthony, a few quotations are available for casting reliable searchlights upon her character. He tells us that she married at what was then the late age of thirty, and that by a curious chance a bundle of her love-letters was found by a stranger and sent to him. 'In no novel of Miss Burney's or Richardson's have I seen such a correspondence, so sweet, so graceful and so well expressed,' is his comment. Surely Anthony was thinking of Fanny's own delicious letters rather than the priggeries of Evelina to her guardian, far less of the artificialities of Miss Byron of the twenty-four fainting fits. 'Though my mother was a writer of prose the poetic feeling clung to her to the last,' is a striking statement. To have kept the least rose-coloured rags of illusion through such afflictions as hers was of itself an achievement. Yet cruel bereavements and acute poverty failed to crush her. 'Of all the people I have known she was the most joyous, or at least'—a fine shade this—'the most capable of joy.' Her tireless quill set up six homes, and in one of them Anthony paints a touching picture of her. For she was nursing 'night and day' a dying husband and two dying children. The 'triumphant' health of Madame de Sévigné was nothing to hers, who toiled at her work through it all and came unscathed through the valley of the shadow.

Eight hundred pounds in four months for the 'Domestic Manners of the Americans,' which created such a storm in a tea-cup in the United States, was a mere drop in the ocean of doctors' bills and invalid luxuries. The real truth of that matter is, that Mrs. Trollope's plain-spoken attack on slavery gave bitter offence.

Sometimes the critic gets the better of the son who aims at being just rather than tender. He says that her 'politics were always affairs of the heart.' At one time ready to offer her modest hospitality 'to any Italian refugee prince without a second shirt,' she becomes 'a high Tory' when taken up by great ladies who found her capital company. In Paris she scored a genuine success, being of the favoured few permitted to watch Récamier in her white muslins damped to cling closer, as she sat upon her green sofa listening to Châteaubriand '*avec séduction.*'



'An unselfish, affectionate and most industrious woman, with a great capacity for enjoyment and high physical gifts, she was endowed with much creative power, with considerable humour, and a genuine feeling for romance. But she was neither clear-sighted nor accurate, and in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, is unable to avoid the pitfall of exaggeration.'

Pleasanter is the conclusion. 'Of reasoning I think she knew nothing. Her heart was in every way so perfect, her desire to do good to all around her so thorough, and her power of self-sacrifice so complete that she generally got herself in the right in spite of her lack of logic.' Her 'mixture of industry and joviality' was surely worth all the logic in the world in that shadowed home where she brought sunshine.

Her daughter-in-law, if she observes with truth that Mrs. Trollope 'was shrewd and observant,' not 'intellectual,' pays her a fine tribute. 'Honest, courageous, industrious, generous and affectionate . . . richly provided with solid and useful virtues.' If this writer with the grim wolf of poverty ever looking in at the window troubled nothing about style and little about grammar it is not surprising. She wrote that others might live, and stopped when she could afford it at the age of seventy-six. 'No author of our day has been so much read and so much abused,' remarks a contemporary. Yet patronised as she was by the Miss Berrys and all the Blues, no flattery turned that steady head. Mrs. Trollope thoroughly enjoyed her popularity, though she never wrote for fame but for the money desperately needed.

To glance at even a few of her lively tales—for lively they always are—is to arrive at a conclusion which does not appear to have been underlined. All the world knows that the renown of Anthony Trollope rests securely upon the Barchester series. The cathedral bells peal through these life-like pages. The Close supplies an ample *dramatis personæ*. Bishop, Dean, Archdeacon, Precentor, Priest, Chorister, their wives and families, fascinate the man whom those who do not fully comprehend her irony hail as the male Austen. His portraiture elsewhere, however good, never has quite the same inevitable sureness of touch. The Rev. Josiah Crawley, perpetual curate of Hoggstock, remains his masterpiece.

This curious obsession for church matters was in effect hereditary. One sister wrote a single unsuccessful and anonymous 'High Church novel,' 'Chollerton.' His impossible father spent the days of exile

at Bruges, a place rendered tolerable to his son by 'the number of pretty girls to whom he made love,' in labouring at an 'Encyclopædia Ecclesiastica,' or 'History of the Whole Church': to sit down to such a task without a reference library was the sort of absurdity it takes a Trollope to perpetrate; common sense scouts the notion that from these ponderous never-to-be completed tomes were evolved Mr. Slope, Mrs. Proudie, and that nonpareil the Signora Vesey-Neroni, worthy of relationship to the Countess de Saldar. Even Anthony's rather inept sketches of 'Clergymen of the Church of England,' with stress on their temperate appreciation of sound port, are too good for such a Genesis.

It has been suggested that family intimacy with a then well-known Vicar of Harrow named Cunningham created Mrs. Trollope's special interest in ecclesiastical subjects. Yet it could hardly account for such voluminous results, and it is only fair to add that there is plentiful evidence that the Rev. gentleman was not the model for the 'Vicar of Wrexhill' of atrocious memory. Her son followed in her wake with far more sanity and artistry. The excellence of his series, from 'The Warden' and 'Barchester Towers' to the 'Last Chronicle of Barset,' was unquestionably foreshadowed by their far inferior predecessors—'Father Eustace' and 'The Vicar of Wrexhill,' with their strong religious bias. Even 'the Widow Barnaby' took a parson for her second husband, to be fraudulently impersonated by her shady third, when she shone at that modish Brighton where really smart lodgings cost forty guineas a week!

'Father Eustace' is 'a tale of the Jesuits,' and in the late forties the very word Jesuit was as the blessed word Mesopotamia to the lover of sensation. There was titillating guarantee of a delicious orgy of wickedness wherever these sworn servants of the 'Scarlet Woman' were to be met. The extent of Mrs. Trollope's knowledge of her subject is gauged by such remarks as 'The Roman Catholic Faith hieroglyphical and picturesque'; 'The Crucifix a pretty foreign toy.' Above all by an amazing 'chapter' held by Jesuits who did not stick at trifles to attain their greedy ends. Poor Father Eustace, 'an Apollo of manly beauty,' was told off to put on mufti, bring over a lovely heiress to Rome, and induce her to take the veil and dedicate her entire property to the order. It looked at first as if all would go according to programme. Conversion proved rapid. Unluckily, Father Eustace, who for a Jesuit of romance was unusually moral, had scruples of conscience when he fell in love, and committed suicide impressively. The damsel

for a moment 'thought of following him to the sepulchre,' until rapidly reconverted by a Protestant papa-in-law, she decides instead to 'live happily ever after.'

The natural conclusion is, that in the Jesuit we reach the limit of iniquity. Mrs. Trollope, however, briskly proves this a fallacy. Nothing if not topical, she had another card to play when Evangelicalism was suddenly fashionable and Jesuits *vieux jeu*. 'The Vicar of Wrexhill' is alleged to be her best work. Have the critics who say this read all of it? For indeed it requires a stout heart to confront these three stout volumes, with their surprising conclusion that an Evangelical can be more unscrupulous than the blackest Jesuit of them all. If Mrs. Trollope had small use for Rome she had less for Exeter Hall, even in May, when, in the words of her own vicar, 'for six blessed weeks in spring six hundred chosen vessels flock to London.'

'The hateful mildew of mystery,' we are informed, hung about the new Vicar of Wrexhill. 'At Cambridge he was thought quite an Apostle, at Oxford that sort of thing does not take.' What did 'take' at Oxford was shown forth a little later by the author of 'The Bachelor of the Albany,' surely the first in fiction to pillory the Anglo-Catholic movement under that name, though clumsily enough. At least he provided the awful warning for parents—'Emily is on her way to Rome, she has gone to Oxford.' When another demure Miss enquired what the nave of a cathedral might be, she was succinctly answered 'The dean, of course.' His Rev. Bat Owlet is, however, harmless as a dove beside that serpent of Wrexhill. The 'pale young curate,' of 'The Sorcerer,' 'The rival curates' of the 'Babs' were less hypnotic than this middle-aged widower.

An ardent young lady cries, 'If he were a hundred and forty, with that smile and that countenance I should think him the handsomest and most perfect person I ever saw.' 'At what age should one begin to instil the doctrine of regeneration in a little girl?' questions an infatuated spinster. 'Not later than ten, my dear lady. A quick forward child might perhaps be led to comprehend it earlier. At eight and three-quarters I have known the most perfect awakening, but this I hold to be rare.'

'What a spectacle!' said Miss Richardson in a sort of rapture. 'A child of eight and three-quarters full of the Holy Spirit! Did it speak its thoughts, Mr. Cartwright?' 'The case I allude to was published, I will bring you the pamphlet. Nothing can be

more edifying than the outpourings of that chosen little vessel.' Until the Vicar discovers her Mamma to have all the money and promptly jilts her, 'Pretty Fanny's way' best suits the Rev. philanderer whose own daughter, sickened by his hypocrisy, has become the most uncompromising of atheists. No sacrifice is too great for Fanny to endure for him whom she describes to the unimpressed Rosalind as 'the pastor and master of our souls' . . . 'guided and governed by whom I glory to say I am.' Fanny makes herself what a brutal brother calls 'a hideous little quiz' by abandoning ringlets for Madonna bands. He receives the meek rejoinder, 'I mean, brother, I have an inward conviction of the sin and folly of dressing our mortal clay to attract the eyes and the attention of the worldly.' Alas, naughty little unregenerate boys pursued Fanny in her mortified bonnet with cries of 'A-men.' Martyrdom was nothing to 'Love's young dream' for guileless Fanny, unaware of her 'guide's' propensity to open and suppress the letters of other folks, a man out on the make in those brave days before the Married Women's Property Act made the sport of the fortune-hunter tame to the despair of romancers. He gives Mrs. Mowbray the cheerful news that 'it is just such sweet and attractive ones as your own Fanny the Evil One seeks for his own.' He turns with an invitation to prayer 'with a smile as if proposing a song or a dance,' and then 'burst into an ecstasy of enthusiastic rantings, in which he besought blessings on the head of Fanny.' 'Let not her gift, her shining gift of poesy, lead her as it has often done others to the lowest pit of hell.' Another time the unbelieving Henrietta and Rosalind beheld the following spectacle. 'On the turf knelt Mr. Cartwright and Fanny. His eyes were fixed on her with passionate admiration, and the words they distinctly heard were these: 'Let Thy blue vault, O Lord, spread over us, and while I struggle to snatch this precious brand from the eternal fire of Thy wrath, pour upon our heads the dew of Thy love; grant me power, O Lord, to save this one dear soul alive though it should seem good in Thy sight that millions perish round her. Save her, O Lord, from the eternal flames that even now rise to lick her feet and if not stayed by the prayers of Thy saints will speedily envelop and consume her.' Sensible Rosalind is excusably disgusted; sinister Henrietta explains, 'He would tell you it was his business to lead the sheep of his flock by every means.'

We owe the Vicar, however, an amusing account of his '*Serious Fancy Fair*.' It was to be free from those 'idols' to which

Mrs. Proudie alludes in a delectable letter to Rebecca Lady Crawley, which came somehow into the hands of Andrew Lang who numbered both among his 'Old Friends.' The very description of the infinite variety of pincushions to be sold 'seriously' fills pages. Yet it may be more profitable to learn that it is 'perdition' to walk in the fields on the Sabbath, or to cite the terrific rebuke to a young sinner who let his hat fall in Church. 'Remember, little boy, you may next enter this church in your coffin.' Whether the lad was to be gored by that mad bull with an unaccountable talent for picking out evil doers which excited the curiosity of Paul Dombey, or whether he was to be poisoned by those berries that caused Jane and Ann Taylor to sing 'That fruits in lanes are seldom good,' forgetful of blackberry and hazel nut, we are not told.

The Vicar, after a formidable amount of misdoings, was magnanimously allowed to 'flee' from Wrexhill; that 'a whole flight of Evangelicals followed,' is plainly Mrs. Trollope's idea of rewarding the long suffering village. As for Fanny we assume she returned to worldliness—and ringlets—after discovering to her tearful mortification that her 'glorious guide' with his 'eye in fine frenzy' rolling on the main chance, aspired to be her parent not her husband.

To Mrs. Trollope we can at least apply the ugly, expressive word readable, and it is no faint praise. Moreover, her inventiveness gave her a variety of plot, astonishing when her prodigious, hurried achievement is assessed. To jest beside the death-beds of her dearest was her awful duty. Maria Edgeworth, writing sparkling 'Ormond' through sparkling tears beside the fatuous father she adored, during his fatal illness, knew not Mrs. Trollope's succession of ordeals. The stricken few who have suffered with her need not to be told this martyrdom is 'sorrow's crown of sorrow.' Undue stress has been laid upon a coarseness, after all only occasional, by those who might consider that Dickens is equally plain-spoken about the manners of *his* Americans. If 'she knew that her forte was vulgarity,' she never connected it with vicious suggestion. The caricatures which serve as illustrations would of themselves suffice to create a bad impression. They are mostly preposterous. Vainly are we told of the 'exquisite grace' of the heroines, the glamour of the curled and pomaded heroes. There seems to be a savage determination to make all alike repellent, down to the small be-flounced girls in their insufferable 'pantalettes.' If Mrs. Trollope's books were not all her contemporaries believed, neither were they all the hearsay of to-day would have us fancy.

If we do not read her any more, we read her son instead and for this pleasure we owe her a direct debt of gratitude. What did she give him besides the priceless gift of dry humour, and this pronounced taste for Church matters which paradoxically proved a gold-mine? There was further the drop of Dutch blood invariably allied to industry and perseverance. The motto of the brick-maker as told to the Rev. Josiah Crawley in his despair 'It's dogged as does it,' applied forcibly to them both. Anthony went on failing with unflagging patience, and a calm belief in his own powers fully justified. Then there was the hereditary genius—it is scarcely too strong a word—for early rising and carrying on, despite what weaker brethren would have thought insuperable obstacles.

Who else could have written chapters of his best seller, 'Dr. Thorne,' and of his sole excursion into the ideal, 'The Bertrams,' in what another novelist expressively calls the 'degradation of sea-sickness'? Anthony got up at what we call unearthly hours, doing his tale of words with the regularity of an Israelite brick-making in Egypt. We are the gainers, we who ride across country in Barsetshire, and meet girls there fresh and spirited as Lucy Robartes and Grace Crawley. For Trollope in the best intuitive sense was a woman's man. Miss Dunstable of the oil of Lebanon is one we should enjoy taking into dinner, and if we want a conundrum there is Griselda Grantley, minx or sphinx, 'splendidly null,' as Marchioness of Hartleap.

It is a matter of regret that he should be reticent as to his mother's opinions of the fine secondary talent, which no one knew better than he did was not genius. We like to picture her revelling in that sermon of Mr. Slope's which the 'Vicar of Wrexhill' would have been glad to annex, or deciding that Madeline Vesey-Neroni would have baffled the very Jesuits. A woman with such a wealth of maternal love would only rejoice could she know that if her own fame has suffered a total eclipse, that of the son for whom she toiled increases steadily. Never like her the comet of a season, his is a fixed star, luminous if not dazzling.

## THE POWER OF POMP.

BY GERALD DEAN.

## I.

BLINKINSOP was an Under-Secretary of State for something or other in the Egyptian Government—I really cannot remember for what—but that he *was* one there is no doubt whatever. You only had to look at him to perceive at once that he was one of the great ones of the Earth. Before he had risen to this dizzy eminence he was quite an ordinary *looking* individual, not *bad looking*, quite the contrary, but by no means striking in any respect. You would not have looked twice at him, because there was nothing there to excite either your curiosity or admiration. Now, however, it was very different. He had acquired a slight stoop, very slight; and when standing erect he would usually press his two hands somewhere over his kidneys, as if to overcome that stiffness proper to the frame of the venerable aged. In fact he was a comparatively young man, well under fifty, but so acutely did he feel the importance of his position as an Under-Secretary of State, that his hitherto unremarkable, if somewhat vacant, expression had given place to a lugubrious cast of countenance quite clearly attributable to the cares and sorrows of high office.

In short he had become a most pompous ass. He drove to his office daily in an arabyieh, an opened portfolio on the seat by his side, a sheet or two of official papers in his hand, now poring deeply and pensively over the documents, and anon raising his careworn head, with a far-away look in his eyes, as he took furtive note of the various passers by who should observe him thus bearing the heavy burden of Government upon his mighty shoulders. In the wildest dreams of his obscure youth he had never presumed to imagine that he would rise to such heights as this, and he was somewhat puzzled now at the modesty with which he credited himself during years gone by, wherein he had not even suspected his own true greatness.

I suppose the war was the cause of it. Before that catastrophe, when the number of English officials in the Egyptian Government was comparatively small, there had been two or three Under-



Secretaries in the whole Service. Now there were two or three in a single Ministry. To meet one in the old days was an experience, for such as I. Now it was a bore. These were times when

‘ . . . Such as they  
‘ Grew like asparagus in May.’

But to return to Blenkinsop. Neither he nor his vanities would have mattered much (for what is one among so many ? ) if he had not allowed his official magnificence to encroach upon his private relations with other people, and the ill-feeling thence engendered to reflect back again upon his official actions.

The trouble arose out of quite a trivial incident. But I must give the details. Blenkinsop had been on most friendly terms for some years with my friend Jeremy Arden. They had in fact shared the same flat in Cairo at one time when Jeremy was stationed there. Their friendship, however, waned somewhat after Blenkinsop's elevation to an Under-Secretaryship of State ; for Jeremy could not tolerate insincerity or affectation ; and the pompous airs and ponderous hauteur of his former associate struck an unsympathetic chord in his generous nature. Consequently, apart from official occasions they only met by accident, in the Club or some such place, on the infrequent occasions when Jeremy might happen to be up from the provinces for a day or two.

One such occasion arose in connection with an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Turf Club, convened for the purpose of considering a proposal to build an annexe, as a sort of waiting-room for members' wives or other female appurtenances, who, under the existing rules, were not permitted to set foot across the sacred threshold. Now not only was Blenkinsop a married man (which Jeremy was not), but he had the peculiar habit of taking his wife with him as far as the Club portals, and, while he entertained himself within, leaving her either to mope about the streets or to sit in a conveyance outside, until such time as he in his good pleasure should see fit to emerge and take her home to dinner. He was, in consequence, an ardent supporter of the annexe proposal, and had spent a vast deal of his precious time, for some weeks before the meeting, energetically canvassing the members to come and vote for it.

He delivered a most eloquent appeal at the meeting in support of the motion, drawing a graphic picture of the miseries of the unfortunate wives and families of members, who, living outside

Cairo, were compelled to await the escort of their husbands, but yet had nowhere to wait nearer than the lounge of Shepherd's Hotel; and calling upon the innate chivalry of his fellow Englishmen to redress this injustice, and at the same time remove a blot from the otherwise honourable reputation of the Club.

Now Jeremy happened to be in Cairo that day, and attended the meeting, as everybody else did. But I do not think he had given even a passing thought to the subject of the motion; and might for that reason have even voted in favour of it. Many of the members were evidently in a similar frame of mind. But the ponderous oration of Blenkinsop, and the oracular authority with which he delivered it, stirred a waggish impulse of opposition in the breast of Jeremy; and he rose at the last moment to defend the sanctity of the Club premises, which by all appearances was about to be thoughtlessly thrown away. He characterised the proposal as a mean device of a few married men, who were evidently not masters in their own homes, to foist their domestic disabilities on to the shoulders of others. He asked whether they were prepared to pay the whole cost of the proposed annexe and its maintenance themselves, since it was surely unreasonable to ask the bachelor members to share the burdens and responsibilities of an estate which they had hitherto been at pains to avoid, for reasons which included difficulties such as those which had inspired the proposal before them. He took grave exception to the word 'families,' in the motion, as savouring somewhat of the nursery; and declared that he could see no reason why the married members supporting the scheme should not rent a small flat, or other suitable premises, for use as a crèche or an asylum or any other purpose they might desire, provided only that it were entirely independent of the Club, and connected therewith not more intimately than by means of the Central Telephone Exchange. He hoped that the members would not allow themselves to be cajoled into adoption of a measure tending to provoke discord in the houses of those who were married, and to discredit matrimony in the eyes of those who were not; pregnant with alarming possibilities in its operation and development, and striking at the very root of the idea of club life. He ridiculed Blenkinsop's appeal *ad misericordiam*, and by a clever burlesque of his pompous manner directed against him the unrestrained laughter of the whole meeting, much to that gentleman's obvious embarrassment and mortification. He concluded with an intensely humorous picture of the proposed annexe in full

working order, and sat down to the delighted applause of that considerable majority of his hearers who were unexpectedly pleased at having their minds made up for them, being thereby saved the uncongenial and unaccustomed exertion of thinking for themselves, for which many of them were none too well equipped.

## II.

The motion was of course defeated, and everybody recognised clearly that this was due to Jeremy's timely and humorous intervention. But Blenkinsop took it very badly, and chose to consider that he had been personally slighted, and that his dignity had been wantonly belittled. He seemed to consider that when a person of his importance condescended to indicate what was the proper course for the Club to follow in such a matter, it was incumbent upon those in humbler situations to pursue that course without demur. He cut Jeremy quite pointedly after the meeting, much to that malefactor's amusement, and gulping down the small glass of French vermouth, with which on ordinary occasions he was accustomed to toy for an hour or so, he fled from the scene of his discomfiture.

He never really forgave Jeremy for his crime of *lèse majesté* on this occasion, but treated him, especially in official matters by which they were sometimes brought into contact, with a degree of hauteur decidedly more superb than any he had heretofore adopted. This Jeremy affected not to notice, but maintained, for his part, a friendly tone and conciliatory demeanour which was exemplary.

This was of little enough moment in all conscience, if Jeremy had not been provoked one day to tell Blenkinsop not to be a silly ass; unfortunately adding the gratuitous advice, that if Fortune had generously compensated him for short measure in Nature's endowments, it was imprudent to exaggerate on that account his relative importance in the scheme of things. The trouble arose out of a technical breach of regulations, the administration of which was one of the numerous automatic functions of Blenkinsop's department. The breach was Jeremy's, and consisted in a contribution to a daily paper of some topical verses.

The Government of Egypt had been carried on for several months previously with uneventful and gratifying smoothness, owing to the fact that most of the rabid and fanatical anti-English agitators had been fulminating harmlessly in exile. These fomenters

of disorder had just been permitted to return to Egypt in a body, which called itself The Egyptian National Delegation; and this at a moment when Zaghlul Pasha, the Stormy Petrel of Egypt, actually appeared to be without any personal following; and when general popularity was, for the time being at any rate, all with the 'moderates' then in office. Zaghlul seized the occasion to deliver a most violent speech, in which he declared that England was Egypt's sole enemy, and must be dealt with as such. There was no response to this particular effort, but the Government was in real fear of the reinforcements, which were arriving in the 'Delegation.' Zaghlul was quick to see that the popularity of the big wigs then in power bade fair to oust him from the position of national idol, which he had for so long enjoyed; and he therefore decided to embark on a campaign of undiluted Anglophobia; mobilising for that purpose the huge army of schoolboys and riff-raff which the country has ever in readiness.

The situation lent itself to humorous parody, and Jeremy fell to the temptation so to use it. He composed the verses following, which in due course appeared in the leading daily paper over the initials J. A.

## THE WAR 'OSS AND THE CABINET.

(With apologies to Lewis Carroll.)

The British Raj was holding on,  
Holding with all his might,  
He did his very best to make  
The country clean and bright,  
But this was hard because the place  
Was in a fearful plight.

The native brooded sulkily  
Because he said that none  
Had any business to remain  
Until the job was done:  
'It's very rude of him,' he said,  
'To stay here with his gun.'

The English and the Government  
Were working hand in hand,  
They wept like anything to see  
The Delegation land:  
'If these were only kept away,'  
They said, 'it would be grand.'

' If Saad Zaghlul and the Primary School  
 ' Ran it for half a year,  
 Do you suppose,' some people said,  
 ' They'd ever learn to steer ? '  
 ' I doubt it,' said the Cabinet,  
 ' In fact, it's rot, my dear.'

' O Roysterers come and demonstrate,'  
 The students did entreat ;  
 ' A pleasant way to spend the day,  
 ' Is marching through the street.  
 ' Let all men hear whom we may cheer,  
 And the women zaghareet.'

The sober people looked askance,  
 But never a word they said :  
 They went into their offices  
 And did their work instead,  
 Meaning to show they did not choose  
 To be by infants led.

' The time has come,' the War 'Oss said,  
 ' To break this piece of news,  
 ' I'll tolerate no rival here,  
 ' No matter what his views ;  
 ' The things you'll think and say and do  
 ' Must be the things I choose.'

' But not for Us,' the Big Wigs cried,  
 Turning a little red,  
 ' You'd think he owned the Universe,  
 ' The Man's gone off his head !  
 ' If he persist in this damned twist,  
 ' We'll do the job instead.'

' It seems a shame,' the students said,  
 ' To play him such a trick,  
 ' After he's brought you out so far,  
 ' And got you here so quick.'  
 The other side said nothing but  
 ' Well ! That's a bit too thick.'

' O countrymen,' the War 'Oss said,  
 ' The game is not yet done,  
 ' Let us attack the Sassenach,'  
 But answer came there none.  
 And this was scarcely odd because  
 They'd left him everyone.

Everybody knew, of course, that Jeremy was the author of this harmless jest ; for apart from his initials, which had appeared, he was well known to be addicted to the manufacture of parodies. Blenkinsop, however, sharing the general knowledge, but not, unfortunately, the general sense of humour, saw fit to ask Jeremy, officially, whether he was responsible for the contribution ; and on receiving an affirmative reply announced that, with the greatest regret, he found himself compelled to take official notice of this breach of the regulations, which forbade officials of the Government to communicate in any manner whatever with the Press.

He condescended to explain that he regarded the offence on this occasion as extremely serious, owing to the delicacy of the political situation ; and he sententiously deplored the possible effects of the publication in an English paper, of matter which might wound Egyptian susceptibilities.

At first Jeremy thought he was having his leg pulled ; but a little reflection, reinforced by a searching glance at Blenkinsop's serious expression, convinced him that this was an error. He looked genuinely puzzled for a moment, and then burst into hearty laughter. This annoyed Blenkinsop very much ; chiefly because he considered such a demonstration derogatory to his office. At any rate he said something to this effect when Jeremy had recovered, and it was at this point that he was told not to be a silly ass. A further dignified protest against this remark was the cause of the gratuitous reference to Nature and Dame Fortune.

### III.

Jeremy was not at all perturbed by this incident, but rather inclined to look forward with pleasurable anticipation to official developments, which in the ordinary course of events might easily extend into the far distant future without definite consequence of any sort, and so provide him at intervals with both matter and opportunity to indulge his gifts of irony and a playful humour, in an otherwise dull and uninspiring routine of official correspondence.

It is needless to say, that as the dossier on this subject grew, his relations with Blenkinsop were not improved ; and as the latter permitted his personal feelings to influence his mind in other matters, the ingredients for serious trouble were not wanting. A nidus for the growth of these ferments was, before many months had elapsed, forthcoming, in the person and affairs of one Tahra Bey Gindi.

This immaculate, highly-scented popinjay was a typical representative of a certain most objectionable class of Egyptian smart society. Educated in England, he spoke English with a faultless perfection and an Oxford accent far too good to be true. He drove a high-power Rolls-Royce two-seater motor-car, with a special burnished aluminium body. It was fitted with gigantic naval search-lights instead of lamps; and various ear-splitting horns and sirens, including a multiple note instrument worked from the exhaust, from which the melody of Yip-ai-addy-ai-aye burst forth at every fifty yards of the owner's awe-inspiring progress through the streets of Cairo.

Tahra Bey had inherited a gigantic fortune from his father, who, an absolutely uneducated and illiterate man, unable even to write his own name, had amassed wealth by the only means by which an Egyptian ever has or ever could amass it, shameless oppression and fraudulent exploitation of his wretched fellow creatures.

At the time when Tahra Bey intrudes into this story, he had already run through the greater part of his father's fortune, and was often seriously concerned for means to repair it, or more probably to meet the requirements for one of his annual meteoric bursts into the debaucheries of Paris. He cultivated the society of Englishmen in Cairo and Alexandria, and liked to be considered as on intimate friendly terms with those of them in high positions. Most of them could not tolerate the creature, and particularly resented the assumption of familiarity and the general nonchalance of his behaviour at the Sporting Club, to which he had been admitted as a member by the influence of Blenkinsop.

Blenkinsop was indefatigable in his efforts to ingratiate himself with Egyptians of the ruling class; and as Tahra Bey moved freely in the highest strata of native society, Blenkinsop had, or professed, a high opinion of him. He constantly referred to Tahra Bey's war service as strong and sufficient evidence of his high qualities. The evidence was certainly never allowed to escape due recognition, for Tahra Bey had neat little miniature silk ribbons, including that of the 1914-15 star, sewn on to all his immaculate shirts; and as he never wore a waistcoat these were constantly exposed to the admiring gaze of the general public.

He had early in the war been granted a commission as an Intelligence Officer, and had doubtless done some useful work as an interpreter for the British Army in Egypt. It was in such activities that Tahra Bey won his medals and his spurs. At least



it is to be presumed that he won the spurs also, for he had invariably worn them.

The question which had now arisen, involving Jeremy and Blenkinsop in further unfortunate opposition, was consequent on this hero's financial embarrassments. A transaction in land was under consideration, in which the Government required to purchase a certain area which was the property of Tahra Bey. It was highly improbable that the Government really required this land at all; but Tahra Bey had privately arranged with the native Minister concerned to father the proposal that the Government should purchase it, and to manufacture the case necessary to support the proposal. In due course the land was valued officially at an enormous sum, based on the unit value of the finest agricultural land. The papers came by chance into Jeremy's hands, for the area in question was in a province of his inspectorate; and, knowing every yard of the country thereabouts, he submitted a report that to his certain knowledge the land to be purchased was almost worthless, being part of an unreclaimed swamp. He did not inspect it specially before reporting, because he had seen it not long before, and was well aware of its nature.

This was a wholly unexpected hitch in the proceedings, doubtless due to an oversight on the part of the Minister, who should have seen the matter through without the papers being sent to troublesome English Inspectors. Tahra Bey appealed to Blenkinsop to go himself and inspect the land; and the Minister himself also hinted that such an expert opinion as Blenkinsop's would, of course, settle the point at issue, so that the transaction might be concluded with all possible dispatch.

Blenkinsop went. He was received at Tahra Bey's nearest railway station by about an army corps of police and night-watchmen, who lined the station platform, and presented arms with all the precision of an Imperial Guard as His Excellency The Under-Secretary of State alighted from the train. The local Pooh Bah, the Mamur of Police, kissed Blenkinsop's hand, and grovelled in front of him, walking backwards until he collided with the native Commandant of Police, who was standing rigidly to attention as if in the throes of a cataleptic fit. Three motor-cars transported the party, consisting of Blenkinsop, Tahra Bey, the Mamur and ten or a dozen minor sycophants, from the station to Tahra Bey's country seat, some eight or nine miles distant. There a gigantic lunch was served which took the greater part of a couple of hours

to consume, including the time required for partial recovery from the inevitable aftermath of mental and physical torpor.

With the returning dawn of consciousness, Blenkinsop sallied forth with his host to inspect the area of land which was to be sold to the Government. They drove to it, and round it, in a small four-wheeled conveyance drawn by a pair of mules ; for the agricultural tracks which had to be traversed here were not navigable by motor-cars. The land was completely covered with a magnificent crop of *dhurra*, standing about seven feet high. No further evidence as to its quality could be required. It was certainly very wet, and the surrounding country was decidedly boggy ; but the Bey explained that a generous irrigation of the crops had just been concluded, and this explanation seemed eminently satisfactory. They returned without delay to the motor-cars, and from there proceeded at once on the return journey to the station. The guard of honour of sleepy night-watchmen, and no less sleepy policemen, was hoarsely bellowed to attention ; and Blenkinsop, assuring the Bey that he was quite satisfied with the valuation of the land, and would report to that effect, took the salute in regal style from the open door of his reserved compartment as the express moved out of the station on its long journey to Cairo.

#### IV.

Jeremy was not asked to explain his report which had been the cause of all this pother ; but was merely informed in a curt official minute that his statement was inaccurate, and had caused some unwelcome inconvenience and avoidable delay in consequence.

It was not for some time afterwards that he had occasion to recall the incident to mind, when in the ordinary course of his work he happened to visit the district where Tahra Bey's estate was situated. To satisfy his own curiosity therefore, and to solve the puzzle which had remained in the back of his mind, he went out of his way to pass through Tahra Bey's domain. There was the land, if land it could be called, just as he had known it before ; the area which was the subject of his report clearly defined by neglected drains and other features all accurately plotted on the Survey Department's Map. But one thing was certain ; that never had any crop, other than one of bulrushes, been garnered from it. He scratched his head and wondered many wonderings. Finally, he decided to return at the earliest date he might be able to arrange,

in order to make enquiries privately among the neighbouring fellahen, in the hope of enlightenment on what was certainly a new and interesting problem; for at that moment he was unable to prolong his visit in the district, owing to other and more pressing affairs.

In the meantime the political situation in Egypt was undergoing drastic and rapid changes. The British Government declared Egypt to be an independent free and Sovereign State, with certain vital questions concerning the Soudan, the Army, and so forth, reserved for future discussion. One outstanding feature of this deplorable madness was, that the British Officials in Egypt suddenly found themselves deserted. The terms of capitulation of G.H.Q. had not so much as mentioned them; and they were to all appearances sold as part of the disgraceful bargain for a transitory and illusory peace.

Before this Declaration of Independence was presented to a dumbfounded and reluctant Egypt, the situation of the British Officials was darkened with the presage of calamity; and accordingly a Union was formed to take whatever steps might be necessary and possible to protect them from betrayal.

The organisation of the Union was much blown upon by Blenkinsop, who from the outset refused to support it or to have anything to do with it. He constantly declared that the officials were making very heavy weather about nothing at all; that their attitude was highly embarrassing to those in authority who were compelled to bear the heavy burden of diplomatic and political negotiations (meaning, of course, himself); that in so far as he could prevent it, no arrangement for compensating officials whose careers were being, as they imagined, destroyed, would be made with the Egyptian Government; that it would be more dignified and convenient for the officials to keep quiet and do as they were told, rather than to attract the notice and engender the ill will of the Egyptian people, whose friendship and even affection it had been sought to purchase by the unwanted gift of Independence; and much more of such like invertebrate and pusillanimous philosophy.

In spite, however, of the passive resistance of a few Blenkinsops, the Union grew in strength if not greatly in wisdom, and its voice was heard above the clouds of theoretical vapours and complacent nebulae, which separate the powers that be from the mundane plane of concrete facts and the lesser beings committed to their

governance. An unofficial, unsigned, non-binding treaty was devised, between the British Residency of the one part, and the Egyptian Government of the other, unsupported and unsupportable by any existing laws or sense of moral obligations ; by which such officials as could prove that their careers had been prematurely blighted, or that their positions had been rendered intolerable by the political metamorphosis, should be permitted to retire from the Service with compensation for their ruined careers. This arrangement was known as the *modus vivendi*. Forthwith half a dozen Blenkinsops took to the boats, deciding with the unerring instinct of the proverbial rat to be gone while the going was good. Our friend, however, of whom this story treats, was crowded out of the first batch of applicants ; but henceforth his views on life were somewhat altered, doubtless due to the unbecoming squint which focused his vision on the hitherto unreal but now substantial carrot of compensation, which dangled apparently but a few inches from his eager nose. The fact that his career was behind him, an inglorious record of pompous vacuity, barren of any useful achievements in any but his own personal interest, would not, of course, occur to him with such force as it did to most other people.

He began to look more worried and more aged than he normally affected to look. He seemed to have become conscious of a vein of ingratitude in the Egyptian character which he had erstwhile defended. His gaze was now fixed in dreamy ecstasy on a golden glow from the setting sun of Egypt's parting day.

## V.

The trouble which robbed him of his sleep, and weighed by day upon his anxious mind, was by no means imaginary ; for it was certainly difficult, for him of all people, to manufacture a case of sufficient strength to ensure the early acceptance of his proposal to retire with compensation. Having regard to the views which he had so persistently advertised on the subject of officials retiring, he could not easily present a convincing case of prejudice, which was the only cause admitted as justification for retirement under the *modus vivendi*. Moreover, he was unable to claim the now powerful assistance of the Union of Officials, on which he had not ceased to pour contempt in the early days of its new-born existence. The native ministers would recoil with horror from the huge figure which, on the formula then in use, would represent the compensation

he would have to be paid. The Native Press (some several dozens of daily papers) would howl for months in impotent fury at the announcement of such undeserved munificence; and the tenacity of ministers, whose sole object in office was to feather their own private nests, was by no means certain to defeat indefinitely the clamour for their impeachment, which was raised on the retirement of each official to whom compensation was paid.

Blenkinsop therefore urged his case on altruistic grounds. He pointed out that his high post, when he should relinquish it, would then be available for the appointment of an Egyptian in his place; and that under the new regime such a condition was the only one consonant with the dignity of Sovereign independence. The dignity and the sovereignty were considerations of little if any interest to the gentlemen to whose attention they were commended; but a vacant post of Under-Secretary of State, with its salary of between two and three thousand pounds a year, to say nothing of other sources of emolument, was a proposition of account, with no mean commercial possibilities. The Minister lent a sympathetic ear to the proposal, and promised to lay the matter before his colleagues in the generous and disinterested light of Blenkinsop's magnanimous concern for the feelings of patriotic Egyptians.

But the golden glow of Blenkinsop's western horizon was sadly darkened in an unexpected manner.

Tahra Bey had suddenly blossomed forth in a new motor-car, more magnificent even than the last. This was a German racing car; and in addition to having more horns, bells, and exhaust trumpets than its predecessor, it was fitted with a silencer cut-out. This the delighted Bey kept almost continually in operation. By day and night this gigantic juggernaut hurtled through the city with the noise of a six-inch Gatling gun, if such a thing may be imagined. Everybody was soon aware that the Bey had had an access of fortune of which not long previously there had been no suspected possibility. Unfortunately, he had indulged his penchant for braggadocio somewhat imprudently in the Mohammed Aly Club, during his more irresponsible phases; and unpleasant rumours were now afloat touching a certain transaction in land, in which, it was whispered, certain ministers had been interested participants.

These rumours had been current for a couple of weeks or so, when my friend Jeremy had occasion to visit Cairo. He called

upon Blenkinsop in the latter's office, and explained that he had come to see him about the land purchase question, on which some time before he had submitted a report which had evoked express disapproval in high quarters.

Blenkinsop, in his loftiest manner, declared that that question, so far as he was aware, was long ago closed ; and he saw no reason why it should be reopened. He added that he had personally been caused no small measure of inconvenience by Jeremy's share in it, and he did not desire therefore to invite his further intervention.

Here Jeremy repeated an old, but not forgotten offence, by telling Blenkinsop not to be a silly ass. He went on to explain that the alleged inaccuracy for which he had been attainted had rankled somewhat in his mind ; since it was not his custom to report, as matters of fact, anything about which there was room for doubt ; and that as this was well known at Headquarters, he had some reason to feel aggrieved that the inaccuracy alleged had been assumed, without so much as calling upon him to justify his opinion. Here Blenkinsop interposed that his time was really too restricted to enter upon 'post mortem' discussions of such matters. 'But,' replied Jeremy, 'the character of this matter partakes, if I do not mistake it, more of the nature of a resurrection than an autopsy.' He went on to explain that he had come to Blenkinsop first, because he thought it only fair to do so ; but it must be understood, that whether he raised the question now, or left it for somebody else to raise later, a record of his, Jeremy's, researches into it was fairly certain to be demanded. He had, he explained, inspected the land shortly after receiving the dissentient minute to his own report ; and had found, as he expected, that his report was perfectly correct, the land being still, as he had reported, almost valueless.

'That is the greatest rubbish,' Blenkinsop interjected impatiently, 'for I inspected the land myself, and saw on it as fine a crop of *dhurra* as I have ever seen.'

'Yes,' said Jeremy quietly, 'I understand you did. But I have spent some days in the district recently, enquiring into the unprecedented phenomenon of a first-class crop of *dhurra* being raised on unreclaimed swamp : and I have elicited the interesting information, that the entire population of Tahra Bey's village, men, women and children, had been employed under his personal supervision, for the week before your inspection, in cutting that crop from the actual land where it was grown, and transporting it for

temporary plantation upon the snipe marsh for which the Government has since paid him the somewhat exorbitant price of £600 per acre.'

For one of such slender mental fibre as Blenkinsop, he acted upon this occasion with astonishing energy and alacrity. He assured Jeremy that the matter was evidently of such grave importance that he would make it his own personal business to deal with it; and in order that he might in no way be hampered by red tape in so doing, he asked Jeremy to make his report in the first instance a private and confidential document addressed to himself.

The *Official Gazette* of the following Wednesday, only four days after the above described interview, contained the following interesting announcement:

'His Excellency Algernon Cuthbert Blenkinsop, Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, is retired from the Service of the Egyptian Government as from the 14th day of March, 19—, and has been granted as Special Compensation the sum of £12,500, in addition to whatever pension he may be entitled to receive.'



## OLD AGE AND THE ACTOR.

BY WILLIAM FARREN.

### I.

WHEN a man has followed the profession of the stage and come to old age whither has he been led? In some cases to affluence, in some to poverty, but I have rarely known among all the men and women I have met on the stage of the past or the present that the brilliantly successful actor's life leads necessarily to an old age of happiness. There is always the craving for excitement among those who have been 'stars,' always the longing for applause, always the feeling of loss when away from the theatre. As evening draws near they become restless—they want to be 'making up' and there is nothing to make up for. They can enter now only by the front, not the stage door, so rather than sit at home, they sit in a stall. In this they find a mild form of pleasure, nothing, of course, like the stimulant they had lived and longed for, but at any rate better than the dullness of home—anything sooner than the home which while they were popular had to be run by a house-keeper. They had so exhausted their emotions on the stage that they had none left for the home, and it is only when the last scene of all is called by Time, the stage manager, that the popular actor thinks of home—and misses it. His thoughts are not happy, there is the resentment at knowing he is supplanted first and forgotten soon after. Did not the great Sarah Siddons insist on taking leave of the stage on ten separate occasions. 'She simply could not loose her hold, infirm as it had become, and so by her own restless vanity destroyed her fame with the younger generation.' What a melancholy reading we have in Macready's Diary. A great actor, a most cultured artist, who had achieved great fame, who knew, none better, that the end of stage life meant to one who had enjoyed its greatest triumphs—disillusion. To whatever heights the actor climbs the fall is bound to come—old age must be served. The great actor has been consumed by the fire of his ambitions and only the ashes are left. To some extent the public have their share in the great actor's unhappy old age. In their often overestimate they have taught him to overvalue himself. The atmosphere of a theatre becomes emotional on both sides of the curtain and results in an artificial and unhealthy state of nerves. The public soon right themselves, but the strain is on the actor night by night,

and it becomes permanent and destructive. The more sensitive, the more cultivated the popular actor is the more he will complain in his old age that his life's work has been written on sand.

There is another type of popular idol, the actor of coarser fibre who looks on his work as a business to be made to pay first of all and to be a stepping-stone to vulgar notoriety. With him it is advertisement, not art. Life on the stage would be stale, flat, and unprofitable if he was not boomed—he dies without publicity—he lives in a paragraph. These two great favourites of the public go their ways by different roads, but they meet at the end and find that the goal of a happy old age is not always reached through a triumphal arch.

## II.

It may seem strange to those who only know us on the other side of the curtain that in my experience the actors who secured happiness in old age were the actors who had achieved little or no fame and certainly no fortune—those who had served by standing and waiting—men and women who had the rough and tumble of stage life, who had toured and toured and at last come to London as Edmund Kean did, but unlike Kean as Tubal not as Shylock. Actors always destined to be useful and reliable and—unnoticed—on whom the 'Star' depended, but who never shared in his calls before the curtain. Such an actor I knew who never failed in his support of his 'Chief.' The great actor would not play his best-known parts without his 'support' was there as Tubal to his Shylock, as the mesmerist to his Mathias, as Fouinard to his Dubosc. So it was for years and years until the 'Chief' passed on. The 'support' survived the 'Chief' only a few years. I never met a happier old man, quite content, proud to talk of his 'Chief,' never of himself. His means were very slender, but then he was only a useful actor and the useful things of this life must not be expensive.

A memory of my childhood was of the happy old age of an actor and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. James Vining, friends of my grandfather. It must be near seventy years ago when I spent the day with them at their little rose-covered cottage by Hampstead Heath. Hampstead was quite in the country in those days, quite a little expedition from my home at Brompton. I recall the pretty little garden with its roses and cherry tree and currant and raspberry bushes and its great joy to me—a swing. Then the tea we had in the garden, with its junket and cream and fruit and the bread and butter and jam, that tasted so much nicer than at

home. The old actor and his wife, gentlefolk in all their kindly ways, had been fellow workers with my grandfather, and they told me thrilling stories of Edmund Kean—how he first came to town and how uncivilly he had been received by the Drury Lane Company. In the Green Room one of the actors contemptuously measured his sword, indicating that was Kean's height. Kean saw, but took no notice. After the Trial Scene all was changed and the actors crowded round the new Shylock with their congratulations. And they told me of Kean's lion. Indeed, my grandfather had often described how uneasy he felt when, in dining with Mr. Kean, the lion used to appear with the dessert and walk round to be patted. I believe the animal was a South American mountain-lion—puma—given to Kean by an admirer in America—an inconvenient gift. They talked to me of many other great actors of the past, bidding me, if ever I grew up to be an actor, to remember that the stage could be made a very ennobling work and that the actor had it in his power not only to brighten people's lives but to bring into their hearts and minds visions of beauty and enchantment which were never to be met with in our workaday world. These charming old people passed their last years in their little cottage—'the stage forgetting—by the stage forgot.'

Another delightful old actor I knew, whose old age was as happy as it was modest, was O. Smith, who acted and became famous as the villain of *Aldelphi* melodrama. I saw and was terrified at his bloodthirsty smuggler in 'The Wreck Ashore.' In private life O. Smith was the gentlest of men, the owner of a fine library and a valuable collection of ancient missals. Often he showed them to me, and would have a game of bowls after on his lawn. He lived in an old house at Brompton, among the fields. What is now Earl's Court was then open country. Many happy days, too, I spent with Mr. and Mrs. Keeley at North End Lodge, Fulham, riding round their paddock on the pony Mrs. Keeley used to drive in a little chaise.

The old actors of my childhood were lovable—simple and happy—content in their retirement, and I am glad to see a few of the actors of to-day appear to inherit the tradition. We have had, it is true, many of us, our sorrows, anxieties and hardships. Some of us have to end old age alone. The wife who shared the troubles of the past has gone to her rest; the boy who did so well at College answered his Country's call, his record is on the Cenotaph and the old actor is waiting patiently and hopefully—he has won no fame, he has just done his work. and old age has brought him—content.

### BEYOND THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER.

ON the north-west frontier of India, a little to the north of India proper, some fifty miles from Nowshera and twenty from Peshawar, the strong forts of the Malakand command the road to Chitral. Here, in the November before the war, were held two days of games which were attended by four or five thousand tribesmen. The polo ground of Khâr has its little place in history, for it was there, on the afternoon of July 26, 1897, that the grooms of officers playing were warned by the natives of coming troubles, and the first attack on the Malakand was made that night. The games, arranged on a very large scale, attracted people from far-distant countries. The Mehtar of Chitral rode down with 150 attendants and retainers; 240 miles of pony track and one pass, at any rate, of 10,000 feet separated him from his capital. The Nawab of Dir, though at the time actually engaged in hard fighting not thirty miles away with his neighbour of Swat, who was also present, sent his son, and prime minister, and a strong bodyguard, and the tribesmen came in from all quarters; from Bajour and Jandoul, and the valleys of the Swat Kohistan: there were stray Afghans and Afridis, and a sprinkling of Kafirs, the last armed with bows and arrows; a disreputable-looking crew in the daytime, but elaborately adorned at night when performing their wild dances. It was not then twenty years since the Malakand campaign, and many of the people present had fought against us, and very many of their kin lie in the graveyards round. These older men were strange figures, with beards dyed bright red, like Kim's horse-dealing friend from Cabul, the skin under their eyes often deeply stained with henna. Some of them had been wounded in the war, and had lost an eye or bore ugly scars along the cheek or ear. Their Mullahs still told them of another great fight coming, and of a happier issue; but they can hardly have had much hope of this when they looked up at the forts crowning those grim heights and thought of what lay within them.

For us—just three weeks out from London—the spectacle was a wonderful one, and we were fortunate indeed in the opportunity; men who had spent their lives on the frontier had never seen such a gathering. The plain was a blaze of colour; the ground was kept

by a Punjabi regiment and by the levy troops, of which the Political Agent has some 300 at his disposal. Those chiefs who wore the native dress were mostly in spotless white, but a few had donned European clothes, and it was difficult to realise, when talking through an interpreter with a mild-faced man in immaculate broad-cloth, that he had attained his high position by first quietly putting down his brother or his uncle—or perhaps several of each kind of relation. There were turbans of every colour, dazzling to look at under the bright sun; every shade of delicate blue and lavender and soft yellow, of rose and crimson and green and orange, was represented. There were wild men in skins, leopard or deer, often so worn and rubbed that it was impossible to make out what beasts had been their first owners; and some wore hardly any clothes at all. All the khans and chief men had armed bodyguards, who hung about their masters' tents; many of these carried magazine rifles of a late pattern. I admired the tasteful decoration of turquoise on one of these weapons, and the owner at once handed it to me; when I drew back the bolt I saw the top cartridge. It was strange to move about alone amongst the great crowd and see curious and often unfriendly eyes watching one, but probably we—few whites as we were—ran little risk from these people, unless indeed a chance Ghazi had thought it worth his while to secure a passage to heaven by the easy conquest of an unbeliever. During some of the games native bands played to encourage their men, with monotonous dronings and beatings of tuneless drums. Now and then when we were camping out in some wild valley two or three musicians would come up from the neighbouring village and sing to us as we sat at the tent door before a huge fire, playing the while a weird accompaniment on little drums or water-jars with their fingers. One of the favourite songs was the fight at the Malakand, and the mighty deeds done by the tribes.

These sports were got up by Colonel Kennion, the Political Agent, our host for many weeks. I admired the dignity with which he moved about among the crowd, welcoming the chiefs, and always having something courteous to say to the lesser men; the people evidently respected and trusted him, and were anxious to greet him, and often asked for his advice and help. The British flag flew before his tent, and here at the close of the proceedings he gave away the prizes. Then the tribesmen set off to their far-away homes. The Mehtar of Chitral courteously asked me to pay him a visit and hunt for markhor, but it was a long road over

passes which might at any time be blocked with snow, and I could not spare the time.

It must be a great advantage to the Government of India to have as their agents men who are sportsmen ; field sports, instead of interfering with a Political's work, surely help it, for they take him into places where he might hardly otherwise go, or go only on a rapid visit. One who shoots makes his camp in many valleys in the course of a year, and instead of just briefly interviewing a few headmen for an hour or so, lives amongst them for some time, and gets to know their position and difficulties, and understand their good and bad qualities. We spent many weeks in camps, sometimes in valleys where an invitation had to be waited for—it would be impossible to do without this—and often on our own side of the frontier, where we could travel where we pleased. We might have a ride of ten or twenty, or perhaps thirty, miles over high, rough passes or dusty plains, but always there would be villages, and deputations—'Jirgahs' they are called—would be sure to make their appearance to see if they could get anything out of the agent ; sometimes there would be only a score of people, sometimes two or three hundred. They brought presents with them as a matter of course ; sweetmeats and fruit, walnuts and unshelled eggs ; at the larger places there might be a dozen sovereigns lying among the sugar and chocolate, but the offerers would have thought very ill of you if you had done more than touch the gold and return it ; sometimes a sheep was the gift.

We were a party of seven, including three ladies, and the equipment required was on a somewhat large scale ; there were our own horses and those of our servants and escort ; this might consist of as many as seventy troopers or levies. And it took more than a score of mules and ponies and over a dozen camels to carry the twenty or twenty-five tents. So the coming of such a force into a valley meant that a good deal of money was circulated in the nearest village—for guards and beaters, for eggs and milk, and chickens, and fodder for the horses and camels ; a small rent was also paid for the camp when it was pitched, as it had sometimes to be, on cultivated ground. The roads were always full of interest ; often it was a rough, steep track made many centuries ago by the Buddhists who once ruled this country. And over these mountains, crossing them no doubt by the very lines we crossed, came Alexander's armies when he invaded India ; you could buy for a trifle in any village copper coins dating from his empire ; they were

continually being dug up in the locality. One high pass was called the 'Elephant's Road': camels could not use it, but I believe ground must be very steep and rough which will stop the greater beast.

Life in these hill forts seems strange to new-comers; men go about their business armed, and a revolver is a constant companion. At a picnic given by the regiment among some old Buddhist ruins, it was curious to see man after man put down his weapon in the tent before joining in a game. Ladies are not encouraged in the frontier posts; leaving out the Agency, there were only four, all told, at the Malakand. Sentries were everywhere, barbed wire often in evidence; you could not go a mile walk without a guard; to saunter home in the dusk from the polo ground was a thing not to be thought of; troopers rode beside the tonga whenever you drove out. There were a fair number of panthers in this part of the country, but it was no use trying to do anything with them in daylight, and night-watching was too risky a business; if it had got abroad that the Sahibs were out after them, Pathans would have been pretty sure to be after the Sahibs, and their rifles might have been transferred to some mud hut in the hills and the owners cease once for all to take any interest in such weapons. Enormous prices are paid for good rifles here, and very great risks run to secure them. We did try watching by night from one camp in a quieter district, but even here the villagers who were responsible for us insisted on sending an escort, which was posted some two or three hundred yards off; it seemed really as if we were trying to keep the cats away instead of encouraging them, and the three nights resulted in nothing; one panther was coughing and grunting not very far away, but the tethered goats and poor pariah dogs got home in safety.

But people live here by prestige as well as force of arms. I liked the story of the old Pathan who—retired from our service—was seen standing stiffly by the roadside watching a regiment go past, and saluting all the time. 'Zor!' he repeated to himself over and over again, which means 'power.' In older days it was not long after a raid before the Guides or Gurkhas were hot on the track of the marauders; there would be a few men killed, a village burnt, a heavy fine levied, and a stern lesson taught. Now the tendency is to keep quiet unless it is absolutely necessary to speak. This may be the truer wisdom—I am not qualified to enter upon the question. But one thing which everyone knows in India, whether he be Viceroy, or magistrate, or even humble traveller, is that the heavy



hand is respected, and generosity and self-sacrifice often taken for weakness.

Our visit to this north-west frontier, and our sojournings in the parts which lie beyond it, left on my mind two distinct impressions. One is a very bright one of glorious sunshine, long days spent in interesting sport and fine scenery, and nights in comfortable camps listening to our host's tales of the country and its races; of the courtesy and hospitality of the rulers of provinces, and of the officers of the various regiments we came in contact with; of friendly native princes and their officials and their generous attention to us. Everyone was kind and helpful; Indian hospitality is proverbial, and I add a further word about it. The other impression is a singularly dark and sombre one, and the very antithesis to this. I look back on barren mountains where hardly anything grew but stunted shrubs, which seemed indifferent alike to intense heat and total absence of moisture; where Nature showed her hostility to living things by the thorns with which she hampered and barricaded their path; I think of dreary, sand-coloured, neglected graveyards, of squalid waterholes which had to be made use of, since the one you looked at when leaving a camp in the early morning would be the only one to greet your eyes till you rode past it again at night. The people were in strange keeping with their surroundings; there was hardly a tiny hamlet, never a big village, in which were not to be seen dignified old men who might have sat, without making the smallest change in their garments, for our conception of Aaron or Isaac, or some old Biblical character, and here and there a lad who could have posed on any stage as an admirable presentment of David or Absalom. But in all this tribal country, and very especially in some of its valleys, for one decent face were to be seen many cruel and repulsive ones. Age sometimes gives an appearance of respectability which is wanting in youth; when it failed here the old men were the most evil-looking of the community. As a rule the patriarch, with his sunken eyes and scarlet or yellow or purple-dyed beard and worn features, was a more satisfactory object to gaze on than his progeny. In one or two of the outmost districts the faces of the young men were peculiarly sinister and forbidding, with strange, furtive eyes and long, black, oily hair, and white teeth, which it never needed a smile to show—the faces never smiled. Hardly one of them would have hesitated to make short work of the white men—for his weapons—if they could have done it safely. Many of them were our guards, and we

went about with them and lived with them for days as securely, perhaps, as if in a village in Kent or Cumberland. For we were their guests by the invitation of the elders and councillors of the community, and they quite recognised their responsibility, and the heavy penalty which would fall upon them if they were found wanting. It was not hospitality or love for us which led these dwellers outside our frontier to invite us to shoot on their mountains, but a wish to discuss some matter with the Political Agent, or perhaps to get him—an honest man—to settle a long-standing dispute about water rights, or grass-cutting, or timber. To have gone into these places on our own account with our camels and tents and followers would have been to invite disaster. The women we very seldom met face to face; they always turned their backs upon us when we came across them in the fields or met them suddenly on the track; sometimes they spat on the ground when passing us. Some of the villages were very large, four or five or six hundred flat-roofed mud houses, with streets—also acting as sewers—so narrow that two horsemen could hardly pass each other. What wonder is it that the dwellers in these lands are a sombre folk, chary of smiles and very chary of laughter?

We rode for days over a country where, except for the young crops in the plains often very far away, the only colours were brown and bistre, and dull greys and yellows; deserts of stony faces where nothing grew but the *senutta* bush, which keeps goats alive, and a few prickly shrubs. The inhabitants are in keeping with their surroundings; battle, murder, and sudden death are not merely names to them. We often met with visible signs of the disregard of life which is so much talked of here, and realised something of the cruelty and horror with which it is taken. Hardly ever did we ride over a pass, high or low, and the passes are innumerable, where heaps of stones did not show where murder had been done. There would be the cairn and—often within a few yards of it—the knoll or boulder or hollow where the slayer sat, and wiped out, for the time with a shot in the back, a long existing blood feud. Little wonder that the frontier men have furtive and suspicious faces; many of them never know when they go out in the morning if they will get back there at night on their own feet. Small wonder that a community is haunted by fear when a lad cannot watch his father's field, to scare birds away, without a loaded rifle, or a respectable old farmer collecting a meagre load of twigs for fuel do without a weapon strapped on the bundle; when the grass-

cutters up on the mountain or weary travellers crossing a pass have to thank their gods for helping them past an ill-omened place. The stories of the blood feuds are extraordinary, almost incredible. In the Khyber *every* house is a fort ; the road is what a child would call a 'safety place' ; once on it you are supposed to stand out of danger, though I do not know that the rule is always rigidly observed. So to get to that road some of the inhabitants of these mud fortresses have made deep cuttings, through the baked soil, down which they can pass unseen into the comparative security, perhaps a hundred yards below. We saw such cuttings just on this side of Lundai Kotai, and were shown a fortified house from which the owner had not dared to emerge, by day or night, for seven years : safety cutting or no safety cutting. The officer of the Khyber Rifles who was with us that day—to whom and to whose brother officers of that once splendid force I give grateful thanks for hospitality—told us that he had both seen and heard these gentry blazing at each other : when a head peeped over a mud wall, bang would go a rifle. As if a householder in Berkeley Square or Ennismore Gardens could not pass from his front door on his way to his office or to Lord's, or look out of a window, without running the risk of stopping a bullet. He told us that when the native officers of his regiment went to their far-off homes on furlough they started by night, and generally *not* on the day fixed for their departure, and they did not always seem to have an amusing holiday. 'Yes, I had a pleasant time,' one such said to his captain, 'but I never went outside my fort.' The blood feud ceases between men serving together in a regiment ; it is probably at once renewed when—after it may be years of service—they leave it.

To set time back for a little while and gaze on those who lived and died hundreds of years ago is often the wish of mortals ; if it could be fulfilled the present dwellers in this northern part of the Peninsula would hardly see much that would strike them as being very strange : the men and women would appear almost familiar figures, such as we may meet any day now. It is hardly likely that there can have been much change in the turban and loose robes, or in the simple loin-cloth ; certainly we know there has been little change in the way they live and cultivate the land. Still the tiny wooden plough, drawn by oxen, or by an ox and an ass, scratches the ground ; it may be shod with iron now, but even that not always. Still, over a smooth circle, the oxen tread out the corn, generally, I think, muzzled, and women throw it up into the wind, and two

women grind it when the winnowing has done its work ; still girls wait at the ancient well and gossip and fill their water-jars. And the streets or lanes in some of the villages must have been trodden for centuries without any attempt ever being made to repair them. The tracks were often so evil, with worn, polished boulders and huge rounded stones, that even our sure-footed ponies could not always negotiate them ; in wet weather they are watercourses, in dry weather the natives can hardly pass them at night. But these people do not love the night ; they keep to their houses then if they can ; they are safer there. There are no little social gatherings to attend ; no cricket matches or choir practices or concerts, or Girls' Friendly Society meetings ; very little, one would think, to brighten a sombre existence, or make a break in long, monotonous years of toil, and often fear. As with the village paths so with the tracks over the mountains ; through endless centuries the people have been passing up and down, and going to and fro from one valley to another ; the hard rock is deeply cut by the feet of horses and mules, and yet it has never occurred to the traffickers to do anything to help themselves or their neighbours, or their sorely-laden beasts of burden ; nothing which would benefit the *community* seems to have appealed to them ; a few weeks' work would often make these paths pleasant and easy to pass over.

Here and there when riding through the mountains we came across the tombs of holy men, dead perhaps for hundreds of years. The natives pay extraordinary reverence to these tombs, and in some cases white men are asked to get off their horses and walk considerable distances both before and after passing them ; ill-luck of the most malignant kind is supposed to attach itself to those who are careless or irreverent. An instance—not so interesting to the chief participator in it as to a listener—was given me in Peshawar, showing how lightly these Pathans look upon a life. A tribe of Afridis, seeing the advantage and profit of having a Saint's tomb in their territory, invited a holy man to come and live with them ; they treated him very well for some time and then, when his sanctity was fully established, slew him and gained their desire, a satisfactory 'Ziarat,' or sacred burial place. Such a 'ziarat' is often in a grove of trees, a green little oasis in the brown sand, a refuge to which chikor and black and grey partridges naturally hasten when disturbed, for you cannot send beaters in to drive them out. The respect shown to these holy men's burial places is in striking contrast to the neglect and indifference with

which ordinary graveyards are treated ; these are unfenced and, for the most part, entirely uncared for ; we rode over them constantly, and it seemed sometimes impossible to avoid doing this. Here and there a grave was picked out by white pebbles, or had a few narcissi or irises planted on it, but the great majority were hardly marked by even a rough stone ; dreary deserts of brownness they were, either in rain or sun. These cemeteries are very ancient and often of great extent ; our little wars have added considerably to the inhabitants of them ; 700 Pathans lie buried about the Malakand, and it is said 2,000 in the villages round the fort of Chakdara. As we trotted over these cemeteries, so also we rode over the young corn and grass, and never was there a complaint uttered ; indeed, when a number of horsemen came out of a village to escort us in they were the chief offenders. I think a British farmer, watching such trespassing on his land, would have been inclined to join a Pathan Society for our extermination.

The rough-paved causeway of Landakai, bounded by high ground on the one side and deep, salmon-suggesting pools on the other, is famous in frontier warfare. Thana, a mud village with a population of some thousands, lies four miles to the south of the passage, and was burnt in the operations of 1897. It was a peaceful enough place that winter when its Maliks entertained our party to tea on the way up the Swat river ; some scores of men on foot and horseback met us and took us in. We rode through narrow, steep, foul streets to the house of the headman, and had our meal in a great room open on one side to the world, watched by hundreds of curious eyes, and then went on by the mile-long causeway to the camp at the head of the valley of Kota.

On August 19, 1897, Sir Bindon Blood, with a force of 3,500 men, passed up this line ; while a flanking operation was being carried out on the right, the Guides forced the causeway, and, in a skirmish at the point where it opens out into the valley, Lieutenant Greaves of the Lancashire Fusiliers and Captain Palmer of the Guides were killed, and Colonel Adams of the latter regiment and Lord Fincastle won the Victoria Cross for a desperate attempt to save them. The former is buried at the Malakand ; I saw Captain Palmer's tomb in the Guides' cemetery at Mardan. I thought of a little personal detail in Napier's account of the storming of St. Sebastian when walking in the latter's grateful shade : 'here Ridge fell, and no man died that night with more glory—yet many died and there was much glory.' Nearly every stone had a soldier's

name on it, some of them a long list of names. 'Mortally wounded' in such a fight, 'died of wounds,' 'drowned' when crossing a river, 'Assassinated': to the list of the latter was to be added yet another name before we left the north. The clang of swords and galloping of horses, the shouting and the tumult was over for many here; there is surely much glory in these quiet resting-places. We saw later the cemeteries of Delhi and Lucknow; here the glory is as great and the pathos and the pity perhaps greater. None of the inscriptions, I think, struck us with more force than that which is carved on a low wall surrounding a wide space of turf in the churchyard of Lucknow, which relates that 'within this enclosure are buried the remains of over one hundred of the brave defenders of the Residency, who were killed during the early part of the siege. Their names are not recorded.' I would sooner look at the statue of John Nicholson at Delhi, turning towards the Kashmir Gate, and know something of his deeds, than on all the splendours of the Taj.

We camped for some days in this Kota valley and shot chikor and black and grey partridges and sissi. Some two hundred of the men of the district acted as our guard, and watched round us at night by many fires; they were a wild crew, armed with every kind of rifle, from magazines to jezails, barefooted and bareheaded most of them, dressed in worn skins or in little but a loin-cloth. The first morning we put a good many coveys of partridges into some seven or eight feet high grass, and with a steady line of beaters would have done well with them. But when the first birds fell the whole crew dashed in to pick them up and got into a scattered mob instead of a rigid line. To run the risk of stinging up any of these lightly-clad people with No. 6 was a thing not to be thought of, and so we had to stop shooting and lose what would have been a satisfactory addition to the bag. I believe none of these men had ever seen a bird killed on the wing before; they were always thinking, too, of the annoying ceremony of 'hallalling,' cutting the throat of the game to make it lawful food. I once had a bad ten minutes in Kashmir caused by this same superstition, when a stag, which I was not sure was mortally wounded, was pursued by hungry natives and I could not keep up with them or stop them.

I bought from a Pathan an ingenious painted mask of reddish cloth, made with long ears and slits for eyeholes, also a painted shield of the same material. Armed with these articles, which were supposed to bear some likeness to a fox or lynx, and his long gun,

the village hunter—a very uncanny figure—peered about over rocks and bushes till he saw partridges sitting, then, wisely wagging his head, he got the curious birds to run together in a bunch, upon which the gun, if it went off, did more or less execution. We spent a few days in the Salt Range, and got some rather good *oorial*—the wild sheep that haunt the valley of the Indus.

The Maharajah of Kashmir, besides giving me leave to stalk in one of his preserves in the north, entertained us royally at his winter quarters of Jammu, where, for the best part of a week, we rode his elephants and drove in his carriages, and drank his excellent wine, and had nothing to do at the end of it but make fitting recognition to his people, and—and this was the worst part of the business—write ‘chits’ for many of them. And we had some wonderful duck shooting in Kashmir.

Then came the end.

On a night journey, from Lucknow to a big tiger camp, I was seized with cholera, and, only just alive, carried out of the train at Allahabad. To my wife, who never lost her head, and to Dr. Guinness and Colonel Close, heads of the great civil and military hospitals there, I owe my life. When I was in a state to be moved, Dr. Guinness took us, entire and absolute strangers, to his own house, where he and his charming wife looked after me for weeks; they could have done nothing more for their nearest and dearest friend. I think now more of the cool house and beautiful garden than of the horror of that night journey.

GILFRID W. HARTLEY.



## A CROWN AWRY.

BY WINIFRED F. PECK.

## I.

THE heavy coach stopped with a jolt, and from the interior, heavy with the scent of women's furs and lace and essences, a lady emerged, followed by her women. For a moment she stood on the stone steps of the great well-lighted house before her, to taste the frosty air with all its faint suggestions of close-cropped grass, of damp box hedges near at hand and open moors and icy peat-bogs far away. Then the roar of the great log fire, the lights of countless candles, the voices of hurrying servants greeted her as she crossed the threshold, and she found herself the prisoner of time and circumstance once more.

'Her Ladyship desires your presence in her room at once, my Lady Arabella.' The house-steward spoke apologetically. 'She desires you to make no change, and I will bring your supper there presently. She has been much put about to-day, if it please you to humour her. The frost has forced the workmen to cease building at Owlcotes, and it is well known what store she sets by that. And an hour since the King's Officers stopped here asking shelter for themselves with three witches whom they take to execution at Bakewell. She would see them when you had joined her, though indeed she is little fit for such exertion.'

'She is always fit to have her own way, Amphlett!' The Lady handed her cloak and gloves to her woman with a little grimace. At the Court of her cousin, King James I of England, she was the Lady Arabella Stewart, a royal Princess by birth. In the great country houses of England she moved at her ease, penniless spendthrift as she was, by right of her beauty, wealth and fashion. Here at Hardwick Hall she reverted, however, as did all the haughty far-famed Talbots and Cavendishes of the Shrewsbury clan, into an inconspicuous and trembling child before its famous and inscrutable old autocrat. King's law or court etiquette might rule the rest of England, but here in this island of Derbyshire, Old Bess of Hardwick still reigned supreme, as she had since forty years ago she took the Earl of Shrewsbury as her fourth spouse, and seventeen years ago death had freed her from him for ever.

'Come in! Come in!' said a deep impatient voice, as, in answer to the steward's knock, a dog barked angrily within the room. 'Come in, and be quick about it.'

There was once a man who planned to write a history of the Old Termagants of England. It would be interesting reading enough, and foremost among them certainly would be Bess, Countess of Shrewsbury. He would picture her as Arabella saw her that night, upright in her great carved arm-chair, scorning the huge tapestry bed which waited to receive her; her table, littered with its many papers and plans and account books, before her; a huge wolf-hound at her feet. A robe of black velvet, a huge old-fashioned ruff of finest lace, and great ropes of pearls set off her erect figure and her fierce, lined, yellow face beneath its crown of white hair. Here in her chair was enshrined the old order of the England of Elizabeth, ruthless, practical, domineering to the last. At one glance from those piercing eyes Arabella found herself blushing, convicted representative of a world which thought vaguely, acted rashly, and spoke foolishly, a new world of reaction and folly, too trivial even for the contempt of that great Survival.

'I won't rise to you, Arabella, blood royal or not,' was the old lady's abrupt greeting. 'I'm stiff and full of rheum to-night. How goes it with you? You hold yourself no better, I see. In my young days girls were proud of their erect figures. Does the frost still hold?'

'I fear so, grandmother.' A second glance at the worn face showed Arabella to her surprise that for the first time weariness and fear, as well as determination, were in those sunken eyes. 'Has the building stopped in truth?'

'Aye, you know the prophecy too?' Did not Bess realise, wondered Arabella, that every one of the Talbots and Cavendishes and their dependents had heard from their youth the prophecy that only as long as Bess built would she live? Out of the family revenues wealth had been taken for one of her great palaces after another, regardless of her heirs. 'They all know it. Did you see some men on the road by the gates? They're my son William's, waiting to drive off my cattle as soon as I die. He and all the rest have heard that the mortar's been frozen two days and that I bade the men pour boiling water on it to no purpose. But I'm not done yet. They've orders to thaw it with boiling ale to-morrow. That should avail, even if the buttery's empty.'

'With ale! Grandmother, you should have been a Queen.'

Arabella laughed as she drew her chair up to the great fire, and the warm supper and hot dishes which Amphlett and his men had set on a table.

'A Queen? Ah, well! It's of a Queen I must speak to you to-night. Who knows when you'll spare me time again from your masques and hunting and Court follies? I'm not about to die, I'll disappoint you all yet, but there are things to be said to-night between you and me which must tarry no longer. Eat and drink if you can while you hear what I have to say.'

Arabella set to work on her chicken and hot posset with a good will. No Tudor lost her appetite, however momentous the occasion, and after all Bess belonged to a day so far gone by that no news of hers, reflected Arabella, could matter very much really. As long as the great Queen Elizabeth lived she had needed indeed all her grandmother's care and protection. Then her position had been perilous enough, for never could that royal tyrant forget that, by her brother Edward's will, she had no right to her throne. Edward had passed by his two sisters, children of doubtful parentage, and willed the throne, however little right he had to it, to the heirs and heiresses of his aunts, Margaret, Queen of Scotland, and Mary, Duchess of Suffolk, ladies whom Fate had preserved from those divorce courts and executioners' blocks in which his father's matrimonial affairs had entangled themselves so often. Because of that unlucky testament the Lady Jane Grey, of the Suffolk House, had died beneath the axe, and the Ladies Catherine and Mary had died in prison. Of the Stewart House, Mary, Queen of Scotland, had been executed, and Margaret, Countess of Lennox, had died in penury and disgrace. Arabella, granddaughter of that Countess, had only known life and youth and gaiety when at last Elizabeth carried all her enmities into the grave. Against the new King James, Arabella, daughter of his father's younger brother, could have no claim. A little ordinary caution in her life, considerable prudence in the affairs of the heart, were all that were asked of her now, and if at times these failed her there were none to repeat her shortcomings here in the North, she told herself. So she ate heartily until a sudden question brought hot blushes to her cheeks and anger to her eyes.

'What's this I hear, by the way, of your playing the fool with my Lord Beauchamp's son?'

'William Seymour is my very good friend!' Arabella tried to speak unconcernedly as her hand clasped a jewel at her neck.

'Pour parvenir j'endure,' was the legend gilded round a crystal, the sad motto of her choosing.

'Nay, never hope gossip does not reach me. I hear he's more. Is the boy mad or are you? Twelve years younger than you, and with a claim to the throne by his great-grandmother of Suffolk. Yon's the road to the Tower Hill, Arbell! Have you no other suitors?'

'There was the King of Poland and the Lord Duke of Holstein.' Arabella spoke sullenly. 'But the King would none of them.'

'He'll none of your William Seymour either, child. Haven't I warned you often enough? There's no safety for one of your blood but in virginity.'

'If safety were all!' Arabella thrust aside her plate and rose suddenly. 'I'm weary of this talk. What of yourself, grandmother? Four husbands you had and eight children, a heart satisfied and a full hearth! Do you suppose I have no longings, no desires of my own?'

'Four husbands, yes!' The old woman stared at four portraits behind her on the wall. 'Rob Barlow, a sickly fool I married for my freedom; Will Cavendish who was my master, and Will Seyntlo who was my slave; my Lord of Shrewsbury whom I loved, who betrayed me! Am I any happier or less lonely for them, now, my girl? Love's but a moment of life.'

'There's truth in that!' Arabella laughed softly. 'But, see you, this is my moment! I love William, even—even as he loves me!'

'Well, well!' The old woman stared curiously. For so long had she considered Arabella as a slender, capricious, fastidious girl, to be moulded at her will, that she hardly recognised this transfigured being. Arabella's long pale face was aglow, her thin lips curved into warmth, her dark eyes, so timidly sly beneath their delicate eyebrows, were afire and awake. The delicate mask of languid fashion had slipped to reveal in her all the hot blood of her Tudor ancestors, all the melancholy charm of the Stewarts. 'Well, you're beyond me now. Have your own way and do what you can with your William. But listen first to what I have to tell. This secret I've guarded all my life, and till I die you must guard it too. There were times when I thought of using it, but the Tower's a cruel damp grave for old age. To you I'll give this paper.'

Out of a little velvet bag before her Bess very slowly drew a letter, and then sat for a long minute thinking deeply, as Arabella read with eyes widening and paling cheeks. Always the old lady had meant to hand over this secret to her royal granddaughter, always up till now she had meant to tell her how slight were the grounds for accepting it, how assured she was, by her own most careful investigation, that it was but a forgery. But this transformation of a weak, irresolute girl into a daring passionate princess gave her pause. Thwarted and desperate, that paper she held might yet win her a throne, and at the dream the ambitious old lady's heart beat as fiercely as though she would see that triumph of her dreams from her grave. Let the girl read! Let her believe what she would!

'How—how came this to your hands?' stammered Arabella, too much overcome by the little paper to face the main issue at stake.

'Some forty years ago, as you know, my Lord Shrewsbury and I were given charge of Mary, Queen of Scotland, in her captivity. In three years she'd consumed our wealth and stolen my Lord's heart from me. 'Twas then I took to intercepting her letters, and, look you, there was need. There's one here with such scandal about me to Queen Elizabeth as would have cost my life. This one you hold she wrote to the Duke of Norfolk, when she sought to ensnare him into marriage, and so here it lies in the bag her own fair hands worked for me. Fair they were, in Heaven's name, but they grasped death in the end.' Bess's voice was full of a life-long hatred. What mattered it if she knew well that other hands had penned this lie, when she thought of the dead years and of her stolen lord!

'But what does it all mean?' gasped Arabella, whiter still.

'Why, what it says. That lying in the castle of Edinburgh she gave birth to a dead child. That there and then her servants buried him in the wall. That she, to save herself and her throne, took to her in his place a common child from some parents unknown and showed it as the King. There's much to bear out the tale, child. Think of the King called King now, his ugly face and shambling gait and rough tongue. 'Tis proof enough in itself, and the walls must hold further proof.'

'But why should she so bewray her crime?' gasped Arabella.

'So that she may promise the Crown to Norfolk his heirs, see you? Even so says she; "which secret being known on our nuptials will assure you that our issue alone can claim to rule over

these two countries when the Queen my cousin hath paid the last debt to nature.””

‘Twas but her cunning, perhaps,’ suggested Arabella—‘a snare laid for him!’

‘Could she be so bold? Had the letter reached him and Fate not overtaken him could she have gone back on her words? How she walked up and down bewailing him when news came of his trial and execution, like any fond foolish girl, with never a thought for the fate of her letter. So ever was she in sooth, so bold in design, so soft and foolish in execution. Not like my Queen who—’

‘But what’s all this to me?’ said Arabella, nervously laying down the little bag with its letter on the table.

‘A throne if you will!’ Bess shrugged her shoulders. ‘Or such hold over the King as may mould him to your bidding. My day’s done and yours is your own. Were I in your place—but you’re of weaker stuff! Take it and do what you will with it. ’Tis almost all you’ll have from me! What’s that? Oh aye, ’tis Amphlett with the beadle and those three witch women. I said I would see them before I slept.’

So a minute later the fire and candle light shone upon one of those specious tableaux which in every age present the ungainly contrasts wrought by the Fates between riches and poverty, good fortune and bad, light and darkness. In their gilt chairs, safe in this room of strange carvings, shining floors and dark panelling, sat the old lady, rich in years and honours, and Arabella, beautiful in her emotions, her black eyes alight, her white skin flushed, as fair and clear as the shimmering crystal pomander in its ebony setting which she held so delicately to her nose. Before them stood three women in the darkest and most ignominious shadow of dirt, despair and death. Two of them were old crones, so bespattered by mud and tears and filth, so worn by journeying and grief that it seemed to Arabella that with one slight shake they would fall to pieces and sink unnoticed into the kindly earth. The third was of a different metal. Tall and emaciated, her long thin face stared in black defiance at them all. Caught and fettered, she was yet the most vital thing in the room, and, as Arabella gazed at her, she was conscious suddenly that this woman was ready to battle for her life, and if she won, to hold it more jealously, as a gift more precious than any other in the room. She knew, and Arabella knew she knew, that in spite of wealth and ease, Doom overhung

those before her who sat in light, no less than those who sat in shadow.

'Well, women.' No such flash of insight reached old Bess. 'You're going to your doom. Have you anything to say for yourselves?'

'Just this'—the tall woman thrust aside her weeping companions, as they fell grovelling to the ground shrieking for mercy—'that you can free us if you will. Loose us then!'

'I free you, my gossip! Am I the King or his judges?' laughed Bess.

'Nay, but your word's law here. You can let us escape. Free us then!'

'That's a strange tone for a petition, in sooth,' said Bess drily.

'I'm past prayers and tears. But look you, Ma'am, at that lady by your side. I've a son deformed, of her age, and a daughter with wandering wits and none to support her. In their name I beg you, who bore children once, for mercy.'

'Tis not mine to give, woman.' Arabella trembled at the awful intensity of the woman's speech. 'I looked not for all this. All I can do is to give you ease on your journey, all I wish is that you read our fortunes.'

'Your fortune, Bess of Hardwick? That's easy told!' The woman raised herself to a menacing height. 'The frost holds and your flame burns low. Your men will stand idle for one day and another and another, but after that they'll break the frozen ground to dig your grave. And for you, young Mistress'—she turned to Arabella—'there's a black fate for you and a tangled one. You'll lose your heart and you'll lose your head, when you're forty you'll win a crown, aye a perdurable crown. Loss, heavy loss, hangs over your heads, the two of you. It's but little I envy you, I, Nancy Forman, that must die to-morrow!'

'The woman's mad!' Bess's voice came harsh and shaking. 'Tis folly to listen to such. You rave, Forman, but the fire shall purge you.'

'Nay, I've my credentials, if you will!' Forman lifted her sharp eyes from the table where the letter lay protruding in its velvet bag. 'If I'm to die, you shall see I do not die for nought. Look at me, every one of you, aye, and you, and you'—with an abrupt glance she gathered to her all the eyes in the room. 'Keep your eyes to mine and ye shall see what I bid you; aye, ye shall see . . . ye shall see . . .'



There was in the room a sudden long-drawn silence. In an age so given to the black arts hypnotism was not unknown, but as it chanced, none in that company had ever been subjected to it before. Arabella found her eyes caught and imprisoned, her head swimming, her thoughts captured. The room whirled around her, the room of stupid, staring dazed faces, and out of all consciousness she sank into the dark blankness of a dream. How long that spell held her she never knew. All she realised was that she woke, to the sound of the dog's long-drawn howl, in a chamber where all the lights seemed darkened on a company who lay back lifeless with closed eyes. Then she was conscious of a stinging pain in her toe: it was, she recognised dimly, a burning ember on her foot which had called her back to life before the others. Was the witch woman still here, she wondered stupidly, or was she spirited away? And then, as her eyes fell upon her grandmother, her senses and her voice returned to her and her urgent cries roused the room. For Bess, Countess of Shrewsbury, lay back stiff and speechless, her voice seeking vainly for words, her eyes fixed in ghastly hatred and horror on the table. Arabella, running to her side, saw that glance, and from the table snatched the little bag, seeking to satisfy that anguished appeal. Still the stricken woman stared in helpless fury, and Arabella held the bag before her, showing in it safely a folded square of paper before she hid it in her bosom. Surely she thought that must quiet the old lady at last and remove the awful horror from her eyes. But in that she was wrong, though not for a year was she to know what Bess must have seen in her last anguish while others slept. For the moment she forgot, as cries rose suddenly of 'The witch! The witch!' and in unutterable confusion the household realised that the woman had escaped them. Search parties stampeded up and down the house, men with lanterns set out into the garden and men on horseback scoured the hills, while Bess lay on her bed with burning eyes, speechless and conquered at last.

All night the frost held. Towards morning men returned with news that the witch was taken, and had been carried off to her death shrieking curses on the Countess and her granddaughter. In the afternoon across every window of Hardwick curtains were drawn in solemn silence, and William Cavendish swept down for his cattle in triumph. Old Bess had met her match in death at last.

## II.

'The hair a little lower here, Yelverton. I would look my best to-night.'

'And your ladyship will indeed do that,' said Mrs. Yelverton proudly. 'Why the world speaks of nothing but your beauty all this year, and you are transfigured to-night, Madam.'

The mirror, silver-framed and glittering against the May sunset, into which Arabella gazed in the stately palace of Whitehall, told the same story. Sitting here in white silken and lace wrapper, her dark hair framing her flushed face and white neck, it was hard for Arabella to believe that she was that same anxious woman who more than a year ago had sat by her grandmother's death-bed. Opposite her, on the wall indeed, were witnesses to her past life. When first she came to Court old Bess had sent to her, in grim pleasantry, five little pictures to be her warders and reminders. From them looked out the fair fatal beauty of Mary, Queen of Scotland, the timid hunted eyes of the Lady Jane Grey, the melancholy Lady Katherine, the poor stupid little Mary her sister, and the white-lined haggard features of her grandmother, the Countess of Lennox. Always they had spoken to her of the doom which awaited the Princesses of her house who married in haste, or remembered too clearly their claims to the throne. Even now at times their eyes spoke in bitter warning to her of her imprudence, but to-night Arabella was gay with the love and beauty of life, and heeded them not at all.

'And now for my nymph's dress, Yelverton! I'll don the skirt first, but give me next my jewel.'

Unseeing, Arabella let the women advance with the marvellous garment of silver, lace and seaweed in which this evening she must play her part in the Court Masque. Her eyes rested only on the jewelled miniature she held in her hand. From it a boy's melancholy eyes gazed at hers beneath close-cropped curls, and if to an on-looker the contrast between his immature youth and the maturity of the woman who beheld him might have spelt tragedy, Arabella knew nothing of it to-night. He was her William, the boy who had courted her only with nervous sighs and longing looks till her return from Hardwick last February. Then but a few kind glances had brought him to her feet, and all too soon his looks of love and triumph had aroused the suspicion of the Court. Together and singly they had to face enquiry and rebuke from the King and

Council, but soon after that the boy's reckless courage had conquered Arabella's fears. Her thoughts flew back to that summer evening in July, when the river shone like glass beneath the setting sun and the palace of Greenwich glowed like a rose amidst the roses of its garden. The Chapel had been very cool and silent as she stole into it, and a fit of shivering overtook her as her boy lover, masked, with two strange silent friends advanced to the altar. But the sun awaited her again in the garden alleys outside, and all the glory of life awaited her too when William clasped her in his arms. For twelve months indeed she had conquered Fate, and to-night she felt she was Queen of her future still. With one last kiss she clasped the picture to her breast and let her women proceed with their tasks.

'That's all well. Now the head-dress and veil. Ah! 'tis heavy enough, but none the less beautiful.'

'Tis a Queen your ladyship looks,' said the enraptured woman. 'No Nymph, but a Queen!'

The words found an echo in Arabella's heart. It was as Princess of the Sea-Nymphs she was to appear to-night in the great pageant in honour of the Prince of Wales, but other kingdoms she felt might soon be at her feet. To every woman comes at moments a consciousness of her power, and it was Arabella's then. Clothed all in silver, embroidered with brilliant seaweed and shiny precious painted shells, her dark hair and silver veil floating around her, she saw herself transfigured and knew that to-night some strange coronation awaited her indeed.

'There's one at the turret door, Madam,' whispered Yelverton, rousing herself suddenly from enraptured contemplation of her mistress. 'Shall we retire?'

Very slowly Arabella turned, as the room emptied, and watched the turret door open that she might see in her husband's eyes his homage to this enthroned Arabella of to-night. But not often for this Princess was consummation of her dreams allowed by the stars.

'But Will, but Will, what is it?' she cried, her radiance fading before the dismay on the boy's face. 'True love, what is it?'

'Just this, Arbella, that truth's out!' William Seymour spoke harshly, his long anxious face curiously like that of his poor little mother, Lady Katherine Grey. 'We're discovered! All's over now for us!'

'But how? By whom?' The glowing Nymph had changed into a tortured woman.

'What matter? I know not! It's done and that's enough. 'Twill all be disclosed to the King to-morrow. What are we to do, Arbell?'

'There's but one thing!' Arabella's cheeks flamed again as necessity spurred her Tudor spirit. 'The King shall know my secret to-night!'

'Nay! Nay!' William swung round and caught Arabella's hand as she picked up that little velvet bag which had been Bess's sole heritage to her. 'Nay, Arbell! We've not thought enough of that, never taken advice, not even of my father! Why no eye but yours has ever lighted on it. 'Tis too soon!'

'One man's secret is all the world's secret!' There was contempt in Arabella's voice now. 'Listen, Will; my grandmother gave me this, dreaming that I'd use it to gain the throne of England. But even as she spoke, and as I sat by her dying bed, I took other counsel of my heart. What use have we for crowns when the heads that wear them find so often a hard stone pillow to rest on for the last time of all? There and then I determined I'd but use my secret to win my will from the king. Already I'd dreamt of daring all and disclosing our secret, and this secret here, to-night, and your news makes prudence of rashness. I'll give him the paper before them all; while he reads I'll kneel before him with a taper and tell him to burn it at his will so he'll forgive us both and let us have our way. Cease your protests, Will! None can stay me now! And hark, hark! there's knocking without. Go quickly!'

The knocks at the outer door increased in urgency as after one passionate bewildered embrace William withdrew. And then Arabella turned and herself opened the great door. From the chequered marble corridor came the sounds of rustling and the scents of a thousand roses. Figures in purple and gold, rose and blue, flitted in and out among the sunlit marble pillars which overlooked the glistening river. On the wings of flutes and violins came a chorus written by Mr. Daniell for the evening in that fair setting.

'Breathe out new flowers which never yet were known  
Unto the spring new blown . . .'

It was dazzled by beauty, love and the pride of life that Arabella swept for the last time into her kingdom.

Sometimes still in historic halls, when youth and beauty dance beneath a thousand lights, we know that romance merely changes its fashions across the centuries, a king who cannot die. Yet never

can it be our lot to see such scenes as those which graced the Palace of Whitehall that summer evening. Not clearly enough do we realise, perhaps, the early years of the seventeenth century as one of those brief interludes when youth and beauty snatched the reins from age and commonsense and ruled triumphant. The twilight of an old tyrant's days were over, the tyrannies and hostilities of Court and Parliament as yet unfledged; for a brief space the Court, regardless of its halting, shabby, shrewd-eyed King and sickly northern Queen, flowered into the tumultuous radiance of the Renaissance. Slender, be-ruffed, tight-lipped, with cunning eyes, the fair Howards and Somersets, Riches and Talbots, Buckinghams and Sidneys regard us with that strange dainty hardness and rapturous joy of life which rings still in their great poets and dramatists. It was for these men and women who laughed and danced and crossed swords among the roses and rivers of a hundred palaces that Jonson wrote and Marlow laughed and died. To-night, by the Queen's will, a scene was laid for them, designed by Inigo Jones, in the Masque of the Sea, worthy to be their setting. Waiting without the great hall Arabella gazed on dazzling grottos, tiny waterfalls, mother-of-pearl caverns, lit by the sun's rays into a radiant fairyland for men and women as exquisitely fair and heartless as the nymphs and Tritons and fairies they portrayed. The little blear-eyed, loose-limbed King, high on his throne of state, with his dark favourite, the Earl of Somerset, at his side, meant nothing to her to-night. She had pierced through the dull world of reality into a world where youth and love and beauty were the conquerors alone. What was this white shining hall but a setting for her own supreme moment, and how could she, transfigured into this Sea Queen, fail to win her will?

'Breathe out new flowers which never yet were known,' the chorus rang again, as, turning to the heralds who were to announce her, Arabella gave a sudden imperious order. As the men stammered and gasped she stamped her foot, and mechanically they turned to do her bidding. ('What could I else,' said one afterwards, 'when 'twas the old queen's voice ordered me?') In tones stammering, yet fatally clear with despair, he walked on the stage and cried, to the sound of trumpets:

'Now entereth, now entereth the Nymph of Trent, the right worshipful Lady Arabella Seymour.'

And so before a sea of faces, flushed, startled, whispering, rustling like a living bower of bright roses and dull leaves, the Stewart Princess swept on to the stage. For one moment she stood

there before them all, upright, fantastic, miraculous, a silver water-lily in her sea setting, and then she moved royally from the stage and sank on her knees before the high, gilt carved chair of the king her cousin.

'Your Majesty,' she said, smiling strangely, 'you know by your herald my full confession. Read in this and my poor heart my only excuse. Read, and having read'—here she stretched out an arm blazing with jewels and snatched the taper she had commanded from her woman—'remember I ask only this: grant me the boon of forgiveness and the right to love where I will and in turn put my poor secret, all I have to give, into this taper. I ask for love and in return I give eternal silence.'

There, on those words, so said a witness of the scene in after days, that white radiant beauty should assuredly have fallen down dead. All up to now had been worthy of her, the great hall, the dazzling glory of the Masque, the majesty of her approach and her appeal. But on that moment, for this most unhappy princess of anticlimaxes, fell no such inevitable and royal curtain.

The little wizened king shuffled in his chair, from the lords and ladies all round rose shrill whispers, the actors stuttered and stammered on the stage, the music died uncertainly. It was to Arabella as if all eternity spent itself before the king opened fumblingly the little bag, drew forth a paper and turned it this way and that. Then, in his dull Scots voice, he droned out shrewishly his favourite exclamation:

'Tuts! Tuts! What's here? A blank piece of paper! Back to your scene, woman, in God's name, and awa' with this fooling. We'll speak of this later.'

Arabella seized the paper and stared at it with dim eyes. Never was her aunt, Lady Shrewsbury, who watched her, to forget the anguish in her eyes. Often she had seen in the play the lights extinguished, the crowd dispersing and emptiness left enthroned. All this she saw now in the figure of her adored niece. Arabella's eyes closed, her cheeks grew white and drawn, her whole form shivered as with ague, her hands fell to her sides letting slip a blank and empty sheet of fair white paper. For a moment they fumbled with the little bag, only to find it empty. Then her lips moved at last:

'It was the witch!' she said. 'The witch!' and then fell silent and motionless.

Those were the only words she spoke as the violas and bassoons broke out again and she stepped back mechanically to her place in

the Masque. Backwards and forwards she moved in the dance, bowing and curtsying and smiling like some statue come to life. For one thing only she waited and she did not wait in vain. From the back of the hall at the close of the endless pageantry advanced two men in royal uniform who followed Arabella unobtrusively from the stage to her own room where she awaited them, a deer at bay. They bore with them the King's warrant to convey her at once to imprisonment in a house known to her.

'You can do naught for me, naught!' Arabella had just time to breathe one despairing whisper into Lady Shrewsbury's ear, 'save to tell William of all this and that my secret's stolen. Let him tell you of the night he wots of and the witch woman. If he can find any traces of her, if you can find any—there's the one hope and 'tis but despair! There's my only parting to you and God have mercy upon us both!'

### III.

High in an elm tree which shadowed the village green and a little country inn a blackbird sat and sang on an afternoon of sunshine and spring winds in the May of the following year. Suddenly he paused, as from an open window came long moaning cries and sobs of despair. After one fruitless effort to drown the sound, the bird flapped his wings and flew away. The cries of imprisoned human beings were of no concern to him.

Three men stood at the inn door talking. The sun which warmed the red brick and lichened roof and emerald trees shone a little unkindly on these human beings. The Lord Bishop of Durham, square, burly, and worried, in his black gown and shovel hat, wiped the sweat from his forehead. Dr. Mountford, spare and silent physician, blinked resentfully, as the glare of its reflection in the great North road which ran white and broad through this village of Barnet, caught his eyes. Least of all it became the third member of the little party. It was not only that he was hot and dusty from the long ride from London he had just accomplished: there are some men who belong by nature to the dark ways of the earth, and this was one of them. Though he was short, almost to deformity, his head was large, and his face vast and pallid with the unhealthy sallowness of bulbs kept too long in darkness. His lips curled into a perpetual secret little smile, his eyes squinted a little inward as if to guard his secret. Like Dr. Mountford he



wore the high hat and dark cloak of a physician, yet from him he differed as some little quack travelling in illicit drugs might differ from a well-bred specialist in medicine. To the sun, the wind, and the high open road, he seemed a natural alien.

'Well, Dr. Forman, see her if you must.' The Bishop spoke irritably as the moans reached his ears. 'The King's permission is above my jurisdiction, though 'tis but a week since he sent Dr. Hammond, his own physician, hither, who, with his colleague, Dr. Mountford here, my Lady's own man, decreed a month's rest. Nathless if you can by any chance turn the Lady Arabella's thoughts—well!' The Bishop shrugged his shoulders. 'You hear that sound, and it's been ever in our ears since she was taken by force from Lambeth in March! Could you indeed assuage her——'

'No skill is mine where better men have failed!' Dr. Forman spoke in so gentle and winning a voice that his hearers felt ashamed of their prejudice. 'Tis no doubt but a whim of the lady's because she consulted with me once in Lambeth in her happier days. To grant it may well prove its uselessness, seeing that the poor lady is well-nigh distraught.'

'Rather she than I,' muttered Dr. Mountford, as the little stranger disappeared with soft celerity into the inn.

'Why hath she a fancy for yon little black-visaged man? I like it not!' The Bishop looked uneasy. 'Indeed the King has behaved but strangely. Why did he send her to Lambeth last June, and why, having enclosed her there for so long, should he order me last March to take her away with me to seclusion in Durham? Why makes she such an ado over the removal that we must needs lodge here for three months, ten miles from London, in an inn where all may come and all may go with ease? I like it not, Doctor.'

'Who can account for a woman's whims?' said the doctor diplomatically. Well he knew that if the Bishop had been in the current of Court gossip he would never have allowed Dr. Forman within a mile of his patient, whatever her extremity. For of medicine Dr. Forman was entirely ignorant, and only through the black arts and his strange Court intrigues had he suddenly won name and fame. It was doubtless as a messenger from unknown sources at Court that he came to-day, and it was as such only Dr. Mountford had allowed him access to his loved Princess. For these were days when men, having but little faith in God, had a most hearty belief in the devil and all his attendants and ministers.

Up in the bedroom of the rough country inn Arabella sat, as the little doctor crept in, her hands held to her brow, her eyes staring forth from stained, swollen sockets with a gleam not far removed from madness. By her side stood one waiting-woman only, the faithful Yelverton who was to follow her to her death, and never was her allegiance more sorely tried than at this moment. It was trial enough to one so set in the ways of courtly luxury to find herself and her mistress in this low room, where smoke wreathed always round the rough chimney corner and the unglazed windows, where a pallet bed and settle stools were the only seats, and Arabella's gowns, rich and bizarre now in their utter unsuitability, covered every peg and nail. Yet this was nothing compared with her dread of the two abnormal beings who greeted each other and ordered her to retire. Not to herself could she disguise the fact that shock and misery had brought her mistress very near to madness, and for this mis-shapen little visitor who took his seat with a strange secret smile she felt a distaste beyond all control and reason.

'You've come at last!' Arabella cried to him, as Mrs. Yelverton went off, sniffing loudly. 'Tell me all then! At once! At once!'

'Madam!' Dr. Forman drew his chair yet nearer and spoke yet more softly. 'The stars have been indeed favourable to my search. At your command and my Lady Shrewsbury's I set out to those northern hills of yours, even as Ulysses, not knowing what should befall me. But Neptune and Venus befriended me and my powers led me. Reaching Bakewell I traced these three women burnt at the time of your late grandmother's decease. It recks not to tell you how I traced two in vain nor how I was led to the ruined hovel of the third, high in the hills. Suffice it that I found it, and there, in the care of her kin, several papers; papers, Madam, of high import to you and me. And yet at the outset we knew nothing, so marvellous are the dark powers. You knew not even her name, Madam?' Dr. Forman paused and fixed his eyes on Arabella, licking his lips nervously. He was prepared for questions it might be hard to meet.

'Nay, nay, I mind me not.' Arabella's carelessness was entirely reassuring.

'Twas not unlike mine own,' ventured the doctor, his eyes like swords' points. Assured he must be that the lady had no knowledge of his connection with the dead woman and the heritage she had left him of hatred and revenge.

'Is it so?' Arabella spoke with no vestige of interest. 'But  
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my letter ! You have my letter. 'Tis a miracle, a miracle indeed ! But give it to me !'

'How dared I bring it here, my sweet lady ?' Dr. Forman's voice was gentle again now, his fears entirely set aside. 'Twas but too likely they'd search me on my arrival here and all would be lost. Nay, it's in safe keeping, to be restored to you'—his voice grew lower yet and he glanced round the room—'when, Madam, you are elsewhere.'

'What's that ?' Arabella sprang up trembling. 'You've other messages then ?'

'From my Lady Shrewsbury. She deigns to be well pleased with me. She sends you this paper in cipher. Read, Madam, and remember walls have ears !'

Arabella walked to the windows and drew aside the rough serge curtain. The light flooded the room and the blackbird's song began again. Life and youth and hope flooded again into the poor, worn, woman's eyes, as by the hearth the dark little man watched her with his evil smile.

'On Sunday !' she whispered to herself. 'The Bishop will be gone ! All men sleeping ! Markham hath the disguise, Crompton will have the horses near by. At five in Blackwall, at six we sail ! All's well indeed, but, Dr. Forman'—she crossed the room to her visitor—'what—what of my lord ?'

'Tis with him is my concern, lady. There are many in the Tower know me well, sentries to whom I've given love philtres, guards I've saved by my charms. To him we must not name in his captivity I will venture with a disguise. Here have I a paper, which wants but your signature, to deliver to him. 'Twill be easy for me and for none other to deliver it.'

'“ On the Lord's Day,”' read Arabella, bending to the fire, “ at VI of the clock think of me. One will reach you from me with a message of high import. Trust yourself to him and the way he leads you.” That's safe assuredly, and you'll see him or tell him all ?'

Bending over the table Arabella scrawled her name and then, with that wild gaiety which foretold, no less than her outbreaks of misery, the doom which lay upon her, she turned, running to the door, calling her maids with excited laughter.

Dr. Forman stared at her back for one instant with suppressed malignity. Then very swiftly he leant down and seized her quill. To the date in Roman numerals he added two strokes adroitly and, rising, bowed himself out of the room unperceived.

'At eight then!' he muttered to himself, as he made his way down the narrow stair. 'Ah, my good mother, revenge hath tarried long, but it's at hand at last!'

It was at the end of May that Dr. Forman mounted his pony and rode away from Barnet, leaving Arabella again for a brief space a Princess of hopes. For now indeed the very central act of the drama of her life was at hand, and very sorely does her history need the whirring movements and quick changes of the great modern story-teller, the film, to do justice to the mad, terrible day when she lost this, her last Kingdom, and with it all but the crown of that unknown realm beyond the grave.

We see first the small inn bedroom at Barnet, and Arabella, gay, reckless, and chattering, flinging on a man's attire. In tall hat and muffling cloak, in long French hose and top boots, she kissed her women, laughing feverishly, and crept, how timorously, down the staircase. Past a window asleep in the sun, past a nodding sentry, she strode with her man Markham, out on to the high road at feverish pace in the burning heat, down narrow lanes, across bare open fields. 'Pour parvenir j'endure' . . . only that, her motto, urged her footsteps on, when every rose-bush seemed to hide an ambush, every bird to shriek her name, every little brook to tell her story. So spent was she that when she reached the sorry inn where Crompton waited with the horses the ostler himself predicted an illness for this strange gentleman. But then the horses' hoofs rang out, the bushes and white road rushed past like a dream, and in mad spirits again she saw the tall spires and blue smoke of London rise in the mist of summer heats. At Blackwall inn they left their horses. Down little lanes, through the forest of mean streets, they made their way, but Arabella was weary no longer. The fresh air of the river stole upon her senses, sea-gulls swooped and glittered round her, strange seamen of every country, with swarthy faces and big ear-rings, passed her by, and at last over the houses they saw the pinnacles of masts and smelt the scents of the far-off sea. Down at the wharf a little boat waited, manned by two Breton sailors, and scarcely were their oars free of the wharf before Arabella addressed them in French, in a voice alive and thrilling with hope.

'Has any gentleman yet reached your ship?'

It was only as the men shook their heads that she was conscious suddenly of a fatigue too great for hope or fear. Into the little French ship they dragged her, and in the little dirty cabin she lay

down without a word. Markham and Crompton came to her side with words of hope, with offers of food and drink, but she never heard them. There she lay, wide-eyed and faint, deaf to everything in the world but the longed-for sound of her lover's feet. Surely, surely he could not now be long!

It was seven o'clock when she reached the ship and at that hour Dr. Forman sat alone in his dark little room in Lambeth. Before him was a wood fire and on it smoked a cauldron. By the narrow window a big grey parrot squawked drearily in the airless heat. Yet Dr. Forman's fat, pale face twitched as if with cold as he bent over the letter he had just completed.

'To the Right Honourable and Worshipful the Earl of Somerset,' he read, 'most humble greeting. If upon receiving these same presents your lordship could condescend to visit the rooms of Mr. William Seymour in the fortress of the Tower, you would learn there tidings of great secrecy and high import to the King and State. To none but yourself will these be given. In haste! In haste!'

'These must reach his lordship by ten o'clock.' So Dr. Forman spoke to the woman who crept at his summons into the room. 'No earlier must it be and no later. See to this in the devil's name.'

For a moment the Doctor sat alone gazing into the fire. He saw no longer the embers of that stifling room, but a little ruined cottage on the hills of Derbyshire, and the woman who had dragged herself back there, spent and breathless, on the bitter night of her escape from Hardwick. He saw the officers of the law drag her thence shrieking next day while he lay concealed, and he saw the poor shivering lunatic he called sister howl and cry when next day he set forth for London. By his dark arts, and specially by those hypnotic powers he shared with his mother, he had made his sinister reputation soon enough. The Fates had sent Lady Shrewsbury and the Lady Arabella to him; his own cunning had sent him back to Derbyshire hot-foot, in search of their secret and his own revenge. It had been of a certainty his familiar spirit which had guarded that secret intact in the ruined cottage all these years, and led him to find the papers in a corner by the chimney. They had saved him alive from that wild madwoman of a sister whom none for miles around dared approach; they had guarded him from step to step till now revenge was certain. Through the window he glanced to see twilight creeping over the low roofs. The hour of eight was at hand and the time for the

last act of his revenge. Smiling he rose and went out at peace with his dark world.

At that moment William Seymour stood alone in his room in the Tower, scratching his name desperately again and again on the deep window-sill. He dared not gaze at his room, so bitterly he hated it now. Here was no dungeon but a sitting-room for a gentleman of quality; if pleasant enough, yet it had been a cage to his youth and manhood. His books were tumbled about; he could not read them in these last ghastly hours of expectancy and hope: his lute lay broken in his agony of impatience. He could not glance at Arabella's portrait, for though he loved her—God, how he loved her!—it was hard to feel any woman worth the dreary captivity of the last year. Not to himself would he admit how staggering to him had been his lost love's looks in the few interviews they had managed to steal while yet she was at Lambeth, yet he knew that to feel a sword in his hand, a horse beneath him, or to see his hawk fluttering in the unbroken peace of the hills, meant more to him than any embraces. Freedom, he must have freedom, and yet his hopes were ebbing fast. From the window an hour ago he had watched a ship here and there loose its moorings to sail down stream at the turn of tide, and yet he stayed here alone, and help could only come too late. Recklessly he was tearing at the bars of his turret window in a mad desire to fling himself downwards and meet his fate in any fashion, when he looked round to see a strange little man in a top hat creep into the room.

'Nay! Nay!' Dr. Forman laughed as the boy stammered out his design. 'Force fails where cunning triumphs. Take you, dear sir, my hat and cloak and this good false beard and walk out as you like. Two very good friends of mine are on duty. Crouch and stumble and they'll ask no questions. They saw me come: they'll see me go. By the gate's a cart of wood. Slip past it and turn past the gate to your right. There wait Mr. Rodney and your friends with a boat. They'll row you to a ship they wot of. By midnight you'll be in a certain lady's arms, and when you are, remember me.'

'But what of yourself?' Already William was robing himself, but he paused. 'I have good friends,' said the little man placidly.

'And the letter I must convey!'

'The good lady hath no more need of it,' smiled Dr. Forman.

Even as William turned and left the room there arose, far away

down the river, a sound which rang in the ears of those who heard it for many years to come. For an hour the Lady Arabella had lain motionless in her cabin, each moment lengthening itself to years, each minute to centuries, waiting always for that step which never came. So deaf, so blind she seemed, that Markham entering, in search of Crompton, spoke out unguardedly.

'Tis no use! The captain will wait no longer! Minute by minute we've managed to hold him back, but he'll hear me no more. Unless we lift anchor at once we miss the tide. Mr. Seymour must have failed in his escape and we can wait on him no longer.'

Next moment he fell backwards, for Arabella, leaping up, thrust him aside and stumbled across the deck to the captain. Just for a moment she stood upright, the spirit of the Tudors alive in her, all their force of will awake.

'Here we stay, sir!' she cried. 'Here, on your life, we stay!'

It was only for a moment. In her poor brain some thread seemed to snap, and next moment she was on her knees, kissing the captain's feet, begging and imploring and moaning for his delay. The man, brow-beaten but a second before, turned contemptuously away. He gave his orders, the anchor chain creaked, the ropes rattled, the sail fluttered. Then, as the ship moved over the water, arose those ghastly cries of misery, echoed only by the screaming gulls. 'Have pity, God, have pity,' rang out the hopeless shrieks as the ship carried Arabella inexorably from her land, her love and all her hopes and dreams.

And meanwhile William was only just setting forth on his awful journey of some thousand paces, with freedom as reward and death as forfeit. From the narrow staircase he issued, his hands clenched, his heart throbbing, into the open courtyard. One hundred steps in the pitiless light—then fifty—then twenty—and then before him loomed the figure of a sentry. With a little nod and unconcerned footstep he must pass him by. That unbelievably accomplished, he could take refuge in a passage-way, dark indeed but hideously alive with the echo of his footstep. Then another open space, another nod, another sickening moment as he must walk deliberately past yet another wide-eyed sentry. The gate and drawbridge danced now before his eyes, and in the opening lay that heavy cart, piled high with wood. One step, two, three and he was in its shadow, while incredibly, miraculously, the driver leapt up to his



seat, shouting a last jest to the gate-keeper. Dodging beside it William crept, his breath gone, his very heart sick. And then the gate was behind him, he was striding free down a dark alley and from a wall a man jumped down and clasped him suddenly. He had just time to tell himself that he was betrayed; that all was over, when of a sudden he recognised Rodney's face, and five minutes later, half mad with exultation, he found himself in Rodney's boat.

Into the darkness of the river vanishes that gallant boy who was for so many years to serve his king and country. Not yet was his game of hide and seek over, for all night long he and his friend searched about the river for Arabella's ship. Just as day was breaking they quitted the search in despair and hired another man to convey them to Calais. But the winds were contrary and it was in Ostend he was landed at last, to hear of his love's capture and lose all hope of her for ever. But life at least was his and freedom, and memories of that fair, fatal Princess, untarnished by the grim tragedy of her closing days.

William was safe and Dr. Forman was safe. Late in the evening the little man stood fearless in William's room before the form, richly robed and closely masked, of that great Earl who at this moment held the clever, witless King, and with him the Kingdom, in the hollow of his hand. Here were two men who understood each other and on the table between them lay the fatal paper.

'For this I ask only my life and my freedom,' said Dr. Forman. 'It has served my turn. It will serve yours for many a day.'

'If it were true!' The Earl spoke doubtfully.

'A throne would be lost in proving it false or true,' said the Doctor. 'I've but little doubt 'tis a forgery, but the walls which hold this secret will guard their secret to the end. If there's aught there, who now living knows how or why it was put there? No king could venture a query. There are spots once thrown on a name can never be washed away.'

So between the two men the bargain was struck. By next morning Dr. Forman was safely home with his cauldron and his parrot, and the rest of his history belongs to his master, the Devil. The Earl went on his way with impunity. Not to this story belongs the record of his evil doings and crooked ways, his great magnificence and his final fall. Yet to the end of his days men said there was some mysterious hold he held over his king by which

he escaped death and exile alike. And that secret is one of the very few which have been kept inviolate in history.

Before the Earl slept that night the alarm was given, and very rudely the dim tranquillity of the sleeping river was aroused. Down from the docks swept his Majesty's ship *Arethusa* in pursuit of the royal fugitive; across the Channel she sped in the light wind, till in that dim twilight which separates one dying summer day from the rising morning, the sailors shouted at the sight of a French ship. Across the sea rang a challenge, down upon the little barque swept the stately ship with her gallant masts and bright sails, and the silence of the grey shimmering sea and opal sky was broken by a volley of shots from the royal guns.

No less a noise could have roused Arabella, as she lay on the floor of her cabin, but the sudden roar, the stampede on the decks, the shriek of a wounded man, brought her once more to herself. She rose and made her way resolutely to the deck, and, reckless of danger, sought the captain's side.

'Courage, men!' the man was calling excitedly. 'We'll surrender to no English dogs! Up with the topsail! We'll escape yet.'

For a moment Arabella stood looking round her at the wide sky and open sea, the fair dim world of silent beauty and illimitable freedom, and then she spoke.

'Strike sail, sir,' she ordered the captain in sudden, sharp command. 'It's I whom they seek. I am the Lady Arabella Stewart making my escape from England. You can do no more for me, and I'll have no more lives lost in my name! Strike sail!'

It was only a few seconds later that the *Arethusa* was alongside and on to the deck scrambled the English captain and his mates, intent on their prey. Yet even as they made towards her they stopped, and the foremost bared his head. Thus once more the Princess claimed her last kingdom over mortal men. In that dim light she stood crowned for a moment by the beauty of selflessness and surrender as she addressed them.

'Hath my lord William Seymour escaped? Tell me but this.'

'It is said so, madam. No trace of him can be found.'

In the faint dawn Arabella smiled, her eyes shone and the wind swept her hair into a dim aureole.

'Take me then. If he is out of your reach you can do your will. I have more joy for his freedom than grief for my own capture. No walls can harm me if he has won his freedom.'

## IV.

Only four years remained before the Lady Arabella won her freedom also. One night in the year 1615, at the end of September, she lay at rest in the grim prison of the Tower, a captive no longer. Around her room walked her faithful woman with dimmed eyes, mending its disorder for the last time. She laid aside the embroidery, all spoilt and stained and knotted, with tender hands. Never more would her poor mad mistress entangle it, nor she herself reduce it to order. She put in a heap the books, unread, yet blotted with tears. She wrapt up the poor broken lute to which the cracked voice had sung in meaningless, heart-broken discord. She gathered up the letters, gazing long at the last signature—'from the most sorrowful creature living, Arabella.' She looked through the robes which hung in a closet, so magnificent and so useless in their magnificence. She took down the hangings, torn here and there by the mad restless hands in their sudden struggles for a liberty which now was won eternally. Then very tenderly she lit great candles beside the white silent bed, and laid upon it that sparkling jewel with its pathetic motto—'Pour parvenir, j'endure.'

'And so,' she murmured, 'the prophecy's come true. At last, my poor lady! You have gained your perdurable crown at last!'

## ESTHER.

## A DRAMATIC POEM IN YORKSHIRE DIALECT.

*Farmer Pennock :*

Weel Esther, Ah mun saay at Ah's surprised  
 At thoo, at's sike a sticker at a job,  
 At nivver prates, nor gasses ower mich—  
 Just diz thy duty quiet, as women owt ;  
 At thoo, at seldom leäves t' oose at all,  
 Suddelins leavin' when we're meeäst thrang  
 Wiv 'arvestin' an sike a pooer o' wark,  
 An all the extry men there is to feed !  
 Ah 'ad to keep oor Sairey back frae skeal  
 To cook an fettle for us, when Ah knew  
 At thoo'd slipped off to Praxton unbeknawnst  
 To me, or Ah wad not 'ev let thee gan !  
 Eye ! Esther, Ah mun saäy at Ah's surprised,  
 Ah thowt at thoo was better nor the rest ;  
 Bud seemingly all women's nobbut soft,  
 Poor feckless creätters runnin' efter men,  
 An nivver a thowt besides. 'Oo is it, lass ?  
 Let's 'ev t' naame o't' lad.

*Esther :*

Why, faäther, stop ! thoo's wrangin' me, an Ah—  
 Ah'll tell thee all, nobbut thoo'll bide until  
 Ah've maäde mysen an thee a cup o' tay ;  
 For Ah's not feelin' quite seea frish an breet  
 As praps Ah sood.  
 T' kettle's on the boil !—

*Farmer Pennock :*

Frae Spiltonbury station its neeä stritch—  
 Scarce tweä mahle ! that's nowt to yan like thee  
 At's lived all daäy as soft as any leädy  
 At's nivver soiled 'er 'ands.

*Esther :*

Tay's ready, faäther !  
 Ah'll just gan seea if t' childer is a-bed,  
 Its near on nine, they owt to be asleep ;  
 An then Ah's cummin' . . .

*Farmer Pennock :*

Its neea use, lass, fencin' an puttin' off  
 Wi' me ; an if ye think ye're gainin' tahme  
 Te mak soom fairish likely stoory up,  
 Yer needn't ! thof my ees is oarder nor yourn  
 They're neän see blinnd ; an thof Ah nivver reäds,  
 Ah's neän t' woss for that, praps mair awake  
 Nor them at dulls what lahtle wit they 'ev  
 I' bewks, an finds ther 'esn't ony ower  
 When 't cums to wark an livin'.

Speäk oot, my lass,  
 An let it be the truth you're tellin' me !  
 Ah've allus trusted yer until to-daäy,  
 Bud noo, weel, Ah deän't knaw, ye'd best begin !

*Esther :*

If you knew all at Ah's bin gahin' through,  
 Ye wadn't mak it woss by talkin' seea ;  
 Ah thowt at ye mud trust me mair nor this—  
 Bud then 'oo could ye knaw, when Ah ain't telled yer !

Its fower year, cum December, since Ah knew.  
 It cummed quite sudden like ; Ah guessed at yance  
 Just what it war, since muther war t' saäme.  
 Ah deän't mind tellin' yer, Ah war afeard !  
 Ah thowt Ah'd gan to t' doctor straight awaäy,  
 Mindin' at muther left it ower lang ;  
 Bud then there was them bairns, an Sairey Jaäne  
 Was nobbut a bit of a lass, scarcelins tonned nine,  
 An ower young to fend for you an t' rest,  
 An seea Ah waited. Ivery year t' paän  
 Got woss an wosser ; bud Ah grew most feard  
 O' neets, when Ah wad oftahmes lig a-bed  
 Wi' nowt to deä bud think. In t' daäy, the wark  
 Wad tak my mahnd awaay tiv oother things,  
 Ah thowt Ah'd last oot lang as ivver Ah could,  
 For all the tahme the bairns was gettin' up ;  
 Bud yesterdaay t' paän was mortal bad,  
 Ah 'ad to clench my teeth to keep mysen  
 Frae cryin' oot. Ah knew Ah'd not bear up  
 Mich langer, seeä this morn Ah gans straight off  
 To Praxton, by t' fust traän, wivoot sayin'

Nowt to neäbody, cept to Sairey Jaäne,  
 At thowt Ah'd just gannd off to deäa sum shoppin'—  
 Ootside t' 'ospital Ah war that scared,  
 Ah nearly runned awaay ! It lewk'd that grim  
 An terrifyin' !—Ah'd not seen it while  
 T' daay Ah went wi' muther six year back ;  
 Bud just as Ah war stood, unsartin like,  
 A gentleman cam 'urriyin' up t' steps  
 I' front o' me, an all at yance Ah seed  
 At 'e was t'doctor at lewk'd after muther,  
 —'Im as she liked better nor all t' rest ;  
 An seea Ah oops an speäks tiv 'im, an sez  
 Ah minded 'im frae t' tahme Ah cummed wi' muther  
 Nigh six year sin', an 'ow Ah warn't ower grand  
 Mysen just noo.

'E minded muther weel,  
 An talked of 'er seea nice, an war seea kind,  
 Ah most forgot 'e war a doctor, till  
 'E tewk me alang intiv a lahtle room  
 In t' 'ospital, an plaäced a chair for me,  
 An telled me Ah lewk'd tired—Ah'd best sit doon.  
 Noo Ah war nivver yan to push mysen  
 To t'lahmeleet, seea Ah maäde as if to shift  
 Mysen to t' shadow oot o' t' leet ; bud 'e  
 Stricht oot 'is 'and at yance to me, an sez  
 'Stay where you are, you're quite all right !'—an then  
 'E axed me all aboot the paän. It eased  
 Me woonderful to speak of what Ah'd 'id  
 Frev ivveryyan seea lang ; an when Ah'd deäan,  
 'E lewk'd at me seea pityin' like, an sez  
 'You meän to tell me at you've suffered *this*  
 For all them years, an ganned aboot yer wark  
 Nivver sayin' nowt ?'—An 'yis' Ah sez, quite low.  
 An then 'e telled me 'e mun 'zamine me ;  
 'E warn't lang neether ! Whiles 'e 'andled me  
 'E war that gentle an considerate,  
 Ah didn't mahnd deäin' owt for 'im. 'E steeäd  
 And lewk'd seea solemn at me when 'e'd deäan,  
 An sed as 'ow Ah'd 'ev to be X-raayed.  
 'X-raayed !' sez Ah, all of a shiver wi' fret.  
 'X-raayed !' sez 'e, it 'weänt 'ot ye at all ;

We onnly wants to seeä what's wrang wi yer,  
To mak yer better, yer knaw !—

It seemed to me as if 'e war awaäy  
For 'oors. At last 'e cummed an tewk me doon.  
Lang passages intiv a darkened room  
At 'eld t' X-raays. 'T war a greeät machine  
At 'issed, an cracked, an spitted violet sparks ;  
An Ah war that afeard, Ah steäd an shewk  
In t' doorway, whiles 'e put on rubber gleäves  
An a greeät rubber apron ; then 'e cummed  
An tewk me by the airm, an guided me,  
An put me wi' my back agin t' machine.  
' Yer'll hae to tak my wod for it,' sez 'e,  
' Ye weän't feel owt,' sez 'e, as 'e sits doon  
I' front o' me ; bud Ah warn't feelin' owt  
As yit to be afeard of, bud the dark,  
And them greeät cracks and 'isses.

An when 't war ower, they telled me what Ah knew ;  
As 'ow Ah 'adn't ony tahme to loss  
In 'evin t'operaätion, 'ow Ah sud  
Hae cummed afore. They scarce wad let me leeäve  
T' 'ospital ; an Ah grew desperate like,  
And said Ah mun gan yam afore Ah cummed.  
Then 'e—t' doctor at me muther liked  
Better 'n all t'rest, sez : ' You can gan,  
Nobbut ye'll promise me at ye'll cum back  
T' fost thing to-morn at mornin' ? '—' Yis,' Ah sez,  
' Ah promise faithful ' (Ah'd deeä owt for 'im) ;  
And Ah—Ah lewk'd oop intiv 'is kind ees,  
And seed 'e trusted me.

Noo, faäther, deän't !

You mustn't tak on bad like that ! mebbe  
Ah'll soomdaäy be as weel as ony o' yer,  
Then ye mun mind oor Sairey's gettin' oop ;  
She's near thotteen, quite able to fet an deeä  
For all o' yer. . . .

An if Ah deän't cum back—

Why ! t' worl'd weän't stop !

D. S. LEONARD.



A SHEAF OF LETTERS FROM  
JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

II.

MRS. WELSH is still in Ireland; Mrs. Carlyle writes from the Barings' house at Alverstoke, not without reflections, so comforting to the poor, upon the evil results of having too much money. 'Haddington Betty' is the old servant of her father's home.

Bay House, Hants  
22nd January (1847).

MY DEAR MRS. WELSH,—Your letter found me just recovering from a long and serious illness, and projecting a visit into Hampshire, not without considerable apprehension of being laid up anew in my friend's house, a risk which nothing but the certainty that I could never get stronger by staying shut up in London gave me courage to front.—It is bad enough to be ill at home and a plague to ones own people—but I never yet found a friends house so constituted that however one might like to live in it *well*; one could think of taking to bed in it without a shudder. But the journey did me no harm—tho' eighty miles it was accomplished in two hours!! and what with a coat made of *Scotch-blankets died black* and a *respirator* and a pan of hot water at my feet no cold got near me—and ever since I arrived I have been getting better—resuming my old habits of *sleeping* and *eating* which I had almost wholly discontinued. The house I am living in is within a stonecast of the sea right opposite to Osborne in the Isle of Wight—and indeed one feels in it much as tho one were living *on* some magnificent Cleopatra's barge—there are so many windows in it looking out on the sea and mirrors reflecting the prospect from these windows, so that wherever one turns there is always sea sea. In summer it must be charming—but in this weather I could do with less display of cold water. For the rest one has all in the shape of accommodation that money and taste can do for one—to read here of the starving Irish or starving anything is like a fairy tale—and what is not common in a great House we have for the moment perfect quiet, the gentlemen who are usually here being all off to the Parliament—and nobody left but Lady Harriet herself who likes quietness as well as we do—when she can get it which is seldom

enough.—We shall probably stay till the end of February and then return to Chelsea.

I had a great domestic calamity some two months ago which was indeed the immediate occasion of my illness—a maid who had been with me eleven years and took entire charge of my house and self was invited to Dublin by a prosperous brother to keep house for him—He is making very rich as a manufacturer of coach-fringe and had suddenly bethought him of having this sister to be his servant—I fancy—not his ‘Mistress’ as she flattered herself. And it was too much to expect that her human nature could resist such tempting offer. So off she went not without tears to leave me—and I entered into possession of a young woman selected for me in Edinr by our old Haddington Betty. Betty has taken into the Free Church and I fear has lost her once excellent judgment in it for the creature she sent me turned out to have nothing earthly but ‘free grace’ plenty of *that*—but no ‘works’ nor disposition to acquire any. She informed me to my horror that she had been partly educated at religious meetings held by my Aunt Anne!! Had I known *that* at first she should never have sailed to London at *my* expense. In trying to get her to do her work—and doing it for her when she could not or would not; I caught the dreadful cold which confined me nearly a month to bed and from which I am only now emerging—Just a fortnight after her arrival—whilst I was lying at death’s door—a doctor seeing me every day—she sent me word by my cousin one night that if I did not let her go away she ‘would *take fits*—and *keep her bed for a year* as she had done once before in a place she did not like’!! *One* in bed was enough at a time and so next morning a *Sunday morning* (Oh my Aunt Anne!) she went her ways dressed out like a street walker—in the finest spirits—leaving me as I have said in bed—no servant in the house—a visitor who had to turn herself into a servant—and so full was she of free grace that it never once seemed to cross her mind that there was no reason in justice that I should have paid two guineas—to afford *her* an opportunity of paying a visit to some cousins she had in London!—Defend me from servants educated by religious Ladies they are all alike—I have now got a little English woman who promises to do well enough—and whom I think none the worse of that she cleans her grate and washes her dishes on Sunday all the same as on other days of the week!

I hope your Edinr scheme will turn out well—indeed there is little fear but it will as you always seem to take in your ground wisely and circumspectly—

Oh dear me ! I often think of you when I see people pretending to superior minds ruining their outlooks by the extravagance of their exactions from Destiny and keeping themselves in a ferment all their lives that which profiteth not—The longer I live the more deeply do I feel convinced that *money* beyond what gives the bare necessities of life does good to no one and to many great harm—I suppose there is not a servant in this house who has not every day more luxuries of all kinds than you or I ever had or dreamt of having in our own houses—and see what they make of it ! greedy selfish, stupid ! looked upon as necessary evils—looking upon their employers as their natural enemies—a Scotch Byrewoman with forty shillings a year who had a respect for her mistress and a love for her beasts was better off than these.—At this moment I know one Lady and two gentlemen who are made utterly wretched by the simple fact of having more money than they know what to do with, indeed two of the three have gone *mad* and the third always looks to me as tho he would commit suicide some day. He was an active and esteemed officer, gay and busy when he became promoted to four thousand a year—left the army and found himself without occupation, and with power to gratify all his whims—Now he makes one's blood cold to look at him !—Do not be so long of writing to me again.—I am always so glad to hear of your welfare.

Ever affectionately yours

J. CARLYLE

I have not heard a word of John Welsh since he wrote to me on his return from London to Edin.

Seven years at Makerstoun had furnished John Welsh with good experience but poor pay ; early in 1849 his mother wrote again to invoke the Carlyles' aid in finding some better post for him. Mrs. Carlyle's reply precedes a letter dated March 30 from Erasmus Darwin, the friend to whom she refers.

5 Cheyne Row

Monday (March 1849).

MY DEAR MRS. WELSH,—Unless you had been ' up thro' me and down thro' me with a lighted candle ' (as the highly figurative Annandale phrase is) ; you could never believe how often and how kindly I have thought of you during this long *screed* of silence ! and yet, if *you* had not written ; God knows if I would *ever* have written to you again ! unless indeed I had had one of those wonderful strokes of good fortune to communicate, on occasion of which it

is said one should 'thank God, and write to one's friends'! Not that, for any inconceivable reason, I had taken perverse determination; on the contrary I often wished and meant to write—but it is an unfortunate way of mine, that if ever, with or without reason, I fail to do a thing at the right time I go on from bad to worse, thro' sheer shame of myself, and end in not doing it at all.

But I will make no more apology which, so far as my own experience goes, is in most cases more impertinent looking and, bothering than the omission.

You do Mr. C and me no more than justice in believing us ready and willing to do anything in our power for John's interest. Besides the fact of his being my *full cousin* (not much to build upon when the cousin is *unsatisfactory*, as was proved in the instance of the other John) he seems from all I have heard and hear of him, especially from this letter of his own, to be a very loveable and deserving young man—one whom it would be a pleasure to help on in the world—But our power is so little! Knowing as we do so many official people, and people of high rank and large fortune it were only to be believed, by having lived and *tried*, in that sort of society, oneself, how difficult, actually impossible it is, to get any post for ones dearest friend; unless oneself or the friend have claims on some political party, or can in some way forward such party's interests. When Mr. C was writing his *Cromwell* he needed someone to copy at the British Museum, and a young Scotchman with a doctor's diploma and no practice, starving here with a young wife and one child, thankfully undertook the work—for many months all they had had to live on was, what the *beautiful* wife earned by sitting and standing to Artists as a model at a shilling an hour!! He satisfied Mr. C entirely during the two years he worked for him—not little to do!—and both he and I took a quite painful interest in him and his wife, and talked about him and wrote about him and recommended him, and entreated for him—to right and left—After he had done Mr. C's work we got him some little jobs but nothing of a permanent sort by all our exertions—till the young wife broke down in it—died of consumption—and the man seemed to be following her. Then we made new and desperate efforts.<sup>1</sup>—I actually *cried* about him to Lady Ashburton and Charles Buller—but the answer then as ever was 'you know ones whole influence must be given to one's constituents. At last a place—of nearly

<sup>1</sup> Compare the letter of February 5, 1847, in *Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters to her Family*, p. 296.

eighty pounds a year in the Record Office fell to him thro' happy accident and partly thro' Mr. C's letters of recommendation—but too late—his long struggle had worn him out—he only filled his clerkship two months then returned to Aberdeen to die bequeathing his child to me! But it's grandmother is a better guardian for it—I tell you this tragedy not to discourage you Dear, few people are so *very* unfortunate as poor Christy was—but to shew little *influence of a practical sort* one gets thro all ones *celebrity*—*Dinners* one may have at the rate of a dozen a day if one could eat them, and soirées and applications for autographs by every post, and declarations of deathless enthusiasm from young Ladies, &c. &c.—but never the paltriest office to give away!—However accident sometimes *offers* what no efforts can *obtain* and you may depend upon it no opportunity of aiding John will be allowed to slip by us.—Meanwhile Mr. C. had employed a friend to consult Lyell the Geologist on the subject the only *scientific* man we know much about—whatever comes of the enquiry I will communicate to you. Meanwhile I need not say to *you* to keep up your heart, for you have shown the bravest heart in worse difficulties—nor to John to be patient and persisting—for has he not been so all these past years—Better to work his own way in the sweat of his soul—with *clean hands*, than to be helped to fortune thro dishonour as his more prosperous fool of a cousin has been.

[No signature.]

The 'friend' above mentioned was Erasmus Darwin; his reply arrived on March 31, and Carlyle instantly sent it on to Mrs. Welsh, saying, 'I have not been quite idle in regard to the business of your young Astronomer,' though there was little hope of a post in England, 'places are in frightful request.' Darwin's letter held out possibilities of astronomical posts at Madras and the Cape, whatever 'your young Philosopher' might think of these. Carlyle winds up with the consoling reflection:—'I have remarked too that real merit does in the end succeed; and that on the whole there is nothing else which really *succeeds* (however much money &c. it may contrive to clutch); but it must prepare itself for a sad wrestle at the entrance, in most cases.'

To this Mrs. Carlyle adds a little friendly note.

MY DEAR MRS. WELSH,—I begged my husband to write to you himself this time, for it must be admitted that men *do* express

themselves more clearly on matters of business than we women do—who are always poor things, mixing up their hearts with their heads in a way that is sufficiently confusing.—I add a line merely to assure you of my kind remembrance, and that however little result there may be to our exertions on dear John's behalf it is not for want of putting sufficient ardour into the business—But positively, to look at this world and see the point of difficulty which it has reached in making an honest living by *anything* and *anywhere*—one would say it was time that people gave over being born!—I hope you are better than you were in the summer. I found some benefit from my own sojourn among the green fields—if it did not strengthen me much it at least quietened me somewhat—and when then there is quiet of soul, strength will come—or if it never come can be done without.

I send this as you desired to the care of my Aunts—What is my other Aunt-in-law after at present? What is she doing with her children? Heaven help them poor things! with such an example of selfishness before their young eyes, they will have difficulty in growing up to any good end.

Ever affectionately yours

JANE C.

John Welsh himself now enters upon the scene. He had resolved to come up to London and try his fortune in person, armed with a recommendation from his late chief, Sir Thomas MakDougall-Brisbane of Makerstoun, to Col. W. H. Sykes, Chairman of the Committee of the British Association which managed the Kew Observatory. As has been said, he obtained an appointment here, and was welcomed into their inner circle by his kinsfolk at Cheyne Row. He wrote to Thomas Carlyle announcing his intention; Mrs. Carlyle answers the letter, not forgetting a flick at the family whipping-post, the other John.

5 Cheyne Row,

Saturday (June 1850).

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I am glad I am so soon to have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with you, and I sincerely hope we may suit one another, better than my other cousin John and I seem to have done; judging from the readiness with which we have resigned ourselves never to meet a *second time*.

My Husband, very *bothered* as well as busy, with his *Pamphlets*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The volcanic series of *Latter-Day Pamphlets* was poured out during the year 1850.

just now, has desired me to say, in answer to your letter, that he thinks you are quite right in coming to London to look at its resources with your own eyes—for even if you find *nothing* to be done here, it will at least be a gain for you to have satisfied yourself that there is nothing to be done—and to have your thoughts freer to turn them in some other direction. He will willingly give you his opinion about anything you may propose to him—Only he fears that *his* acquaintance is of a sort that cannot be of any use to you—He was trying this morning to recollect a single *scientific* man that he knew personally—and could not name *one*!! However when we know *whom* you would like to see; it is possible we may find means of getting at them.

I suppose you are *quite old enough* and have sense enough now to be trusted anywhere *on your own basis*—even in London. Still I should have liked to offer you a bed on your first coming, in case of your ‘falling (*not*) amongst thieves’ but amongst—bugs! which is fully as bad tho less irretrievable.—But I have no room at present and am not likely to have for an indefinite time—my Brother-in-law Dr. Carlyle having arrived a week ago—with no plan in his head—to occupy all our available accommodation.

Whenever you like to come during the day, however you will be welcome—And if you are to see as many *sights*, at *midnight*(!) as your cousin did; it will be more desirable for yourself that you should be fixed in a more accessible locality than Chelsea. But I fancy *your* midnight spectacles are chiefly the Stars—all the better for *you*!

With kind regards to your Mother and my aunts

Yours sincerely

JANE CARLYLE

From letters to his mother, sometimes, alas, undated, we learn of John's instant welcome by the Carlyles. He arrived in London on a Tuesday; on the Wednesday went down to Chelsea, saw Mrs. Carlyle, ‘and was very well received.’ She invited him to dinner that evening, when he saw ‘Mr. Carlyle,’ and ‘Mr. Darwin, the gentleman who wrote about the Parramatta Observatory came in, inviting himself to tea.’ Better still; they were going out that evening ‘to Thackeray's, the Snob man,’ and took John with them to ‘show him a lion or two.’ His share of ‘lions’ was the sight of two novelists, for ‘Mrs. Crowe was there and a young lady, the author of Jane Eyre; that is all I can tell about the little



soiree.' Would that he, or better, Mrs. Carlyle, had grasped the inner humour of the occasion, for it was Charlotte Brontë's return visit to Thackeray under the ægis of her kind publisher, George Smith, and she was so shy and curt and monosyllabic that a blight fell upon the company, and the unhappy host slunk away ignobly for the solace of a cigar.

The following evening he was at Cheyne Row again for two or three hours, and to his great pleasure Mrs. Carlyle made him a present of 'an old Galvanic battery which she wanted out of the house; some madman had given it to her, she said. I brought it off triumphantly and shall get it patched up and turn it to some use.'

Very soon after this, on July 6 and again about the 10th, we catch further glimpses of the Cheyne Row household and its stream of visitors, the drawing out of Carlyle by Ruskin, and the lively frankness with which Mrs. Carlyle pours out those devastating experiences which reappear so picturesquely in her own letters, from the imagined terrors of aristocratic balls and low dresses to the distracting reality of Dr. John Carlyle's squeaky boots.

July 6, 1850.

I WAS calling by chance the other evening on the Carlyles there came in to tea some people. Mr. Darwin whom I mentioned before. Mr. Ruskin and his wife (a young Scotchwoman from Perth and must have passed as the fair Maid of Perth)—Mr. R. is the 'Oxford Graduate' who writes on Art—a Mrs. Wedgewood one of the *Wedgewood ware* people—a Mr. Richmond an artist, and a Mr. De Vere a poet a puseyite of the Young England school and nephew of Lord Mounteagle. I admire the simple way in which they entertain—the entertainment of these people would not cost eighteenpence.

Mr. Ruskin drew out Mr. Carlyle's religious opinions and by judicious questioning hemmed him into expressing his whole *confession*. He denies the personal existence of a devil—he says that he feels a devil within him but denies that any power can clip the wings of that devil but his own. Christianity seems to be with him out of date and something else must supply its place although what that is he gives no utterance. He evidently does not see the length towards Deism that he has gone. He gives his present persuasions as the result of a long and strenuous course of thinking which he says almost drove him out of his wits. Everything is now a lie with him. Poor man he seems in a very hopeless state

indeed and he cannot be argued with as he seizes hold of the thread of argument himself and putting down his opponent with talk he carries on the argument to his

[End of fragment.]

About July 10, 1850.

I am to go on Monday evening with Mrs. C. to a party at a Lady's who has asked Mrs. C. to make a society for her. What a precious addition to the old lady's society I will make!

Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle were at a magnificent ball given by Lady Ashburton about a fortnight ago the grandest thing that has been in London this season about 700 of the top top people there—the Duke of Wellington and such. Mrs. C. told me that when Carlyle insisted on their going she sat down and cried for two hours about what she was to put on as a ball dress—it was the first grand aristocratic ball he had ever been at and the first of any kind she had been at for many years. Fancy Carlyle at a ball of that sort! Mrs. C. says however that with his white waistcoat and white gloves he looked quite as respectable as the most of the people there as the men she said were mostly horribly ugly. She is a first rate hand at describing a thing of that sort. *He* went to see what sort of a thing a grand ball was.

Dr. Carlyle has left them about 10 days ago—he is gone to live with his mother in Annandale. Mrs. Carlyle seems glad he is away as he made so much noise walking up and down stairs with his creaking boots (and all his three pairs creaked) that he disturbed his brother while at his pamphlets. They have a very great number of people coming about them in an easy way. He works during the day and is thus disengaged in the evenings and quite at the mercy of all who choose to come.

Later in the same year, when John had been appointed to Kew and was settled near by at Richmond, a little note about a forgotten engagement shows the easy intimacy at which they had already arrived.

5 Cheyne Row

Saturday night (1850).

MY DEAR JOHN,—When you said *Wednesday* you might observe the moment of hesitation in my acceptance. It proceeded from a dim notion of *something to come off* on Wednesday,—I could (not) exactly tell what, and on ransacking my memory—all 'gone to

smithers' in this long distracting row of work—I could only recall that on *Wednesday* the upholsterer was to put up my bedcurtains, and the '*Supplier of Marriage orders and Baby-linen to families*' was to bring me home two smart new night-shifts—or as my *Laundress* more elegantly styles them night-*Shemisses*, preparatory to my visit at the Grange; neither of which advents could interfere with *your* dining here at 5 o'clock. On my way home however, my companion not speaking *one* word to disturb reflection, I recollected that I was engaged to dine at *seven* with Mr. Senior at Kensington! and witness afterwards *Punch* performed by Tom Taylor and Wigan the actor! a delectable spectacle one must hope.—Now I tell you this in case of your coming *late*—I shall not need to go till twenty minutes before seven—so that you can still dine here at five—

Affectionately yours

JANE CARLYLE.

In the course of his official work at Kew Observatory John Welsh made four balloon ascents in 1852, assisted by the well-known aeronaut Charles Green, in order to make certain meteorological observations. It was presumably the first of these which evoked the following letter, for it took place on August 17, and this alone of the four occasions, fell on a Tuesday :

5 Cheyne Row

Tuesday (Aug. 17, 1852).

MY DEAR MRS. WELSH,—My head is so full of John and his balloon tonight that I cannot, I think do better, while waiting here for him, than write a few lines to *you*. Tomorrow I hope he will write to you himself, but he will not tell you what I can tell you viz: that nothing in this world ever was more perfect than his whole behaviour today; under circumstances which must have tried him in more ways than one. Even I who had so good an opinion of his sense and *substance* before; was astonished at the imperturbable, goodhumoured, intelligent way in which he conducted himself. I was with him for an hour and half before the balloon went off, and not one slightest indication of *nervousness* did I see in him—nor of excitement from all the notice he had suddenly become the object of. He went about minding his own business talking goodhumouredly with the people who *would* talk to him, and when finally he mounted into the air he took off his

hat and waved it three times over his head, with a cool courtesy that changed my momentary terror into admiration. My dear woman you may be proud of your son!—he will go far yet in science and in distinction or I am no judge of men!—

One thing surprised me today and that was, the number of friends he seems to have already made for himself. So many people there both male and female seemed to be personally interested in him. With me he is still so *silent* that I hardly hoped others could have so soon found the worth that lies under that reserved manner of his.

He meant, if the balloon came down near any railway to return to London tonight, and was to come here, however late the hour to satisfy me of his safety. I am anxiously expecting him, but without fear *now*, I was horribly nervous *before* the balloon went up but when I saw him in the air overhead, waving his hat with such perfect composure; and saw old Green standing on the *edge* of the car, also waving *his* hat; as if it were the simplest thing in Nature, my fears grew to look ridiculous to myself.

Affectionately yours

JANE W. CARLYLE

September 1853 saw the beginning in bricks and mortar of the long meditated 'silent room' which was to bring, but never brought, to Carlyle the perfect quiet he desired for his working hours over 'Friedrich.' His subsequent execration of the whole thing explodes over two entire pages of the 'Reminiscences.' And poor Chorley the critic gets the blame for having over-persuaded Carlyle's own doubts on the matter! Mrs. Carlyle returns to unexpected turmoil, and demands a friendly ear into which she may exhale her feelings.

5 Cheyne Row

Saturday (Sept. 1853).

MY DEAR JOHN,—If you have not by this time been taken up into the skies and made a new star of; understand that I am here—and wearying to see you.

The house is to be recognised by large scaffolding on front of it and a regiment of men working like ants on the roof— My Dear! imagine it we are again building! Mr. C—who was never to allow 'a workman of any denomination to set his foot within *his* premises again in this world' contracts with a Builder 'of Genius' during my absence to make his 'a perfectly silent apartment up

above there'—What a pity he was not in *your* place! and this old ideal of his is now being worked out into brick and mortar.

God preserve us all—I have quantities of things to tell you—  
'Come and take them!'

Affectionately yours

JANE W. CARLYLE

As for the result, John remarks on October 22, 1853: 'The silent room is nearly completed but it (is) so full of ventilating air holes that besides the inconvenience of being blown up the chimney the noise of organs and crowing cocks will find easy access unless he prefers being stifled.'

From another letter to John, describing the untimely death of Dr. John Carlyle's wife in 1854, after a week of grievous suffering, one sentence may be quoted as characteristic of Mrs. Carlyle's emotional outlook.

'As for Dr. Carlyle he has not seemed to know what he was doing—and is now in an apathetic state that I do not feel much interest in. My Husband positively looks more heart-sore than *he* does.'

The date of the next letter, to Mrs. George Welsh, is determined by Tennyson's reading of 'Maud.' This was composed in 1854, and published in the autumn of 1855.

As to the 'distinguished' men named in this letter, Dr. W. B. Carpenter was a naturalist and physiologist, who in 1856 became Registrar of the University of London. Sir William Grove, who was a lawyer as well as a great physicist, was knighted in 1872 on his elevation to the Bench. He is best remembered as the first to establish the principle of the correlation of physical forces.

Colonel Sykes, already mentioned, was head of the Kew committee under which John Welsh worked at the Observatory. Lord Bessborough was the fifth earl and held the title from 1847 to 1880 without attaining the fame of his predecessor or his successor either in politics or at cricket. He married the daughter of the fifth Duke of Richmond.

The 'old Scotch engineer' is clearly (Sir) William Fairbairn, the friend of George Stephenson and his collaborator in building the Menai Bridge, who was now sixty-six, rather than his brother (Sir) Peter, who was ten years younger.

Henry Drummond, banker, M.P. and religious enthusiast, described by Carlyle as 'a singular mixture of all things, of the

saint, the wit, the philosopher,' became a follower of Irving, helped to found the Irvingite 'Holy Catholic Apostolic' Church, and built for the faithful a costly church on his estate at Albury in Surrey. Curiously enough, he was the former owner of The Grange, where the Carlyles were staying with the Barings, who had succeeded to the Ashburton title in 1848.

The Grange,  
Thursday.

MY DEAR MARGARET,—Your kind letter was very welcome indeed, and I ought to have answered it sooner. But if one did *all* the things one ought to do; where would be the use of that prayer in the church-service for those who 'leave undone the things they ought to have done'—one must make an omission now and then just out of respect for the Prayerbook—which is infallible.

I wasn't poisoned after all—only nearly so—and I am now sleeping a little, without morphine; and feel as well as, perhaps rather better than when I left home. For the rest; I can't say I have been as happy as I ought to be; considering that I have lived all these weeks in a perpetual whirl of *talent* and *wit*, and that I have had *champagne to dinner every day*!! God help me! what a number of '*distinguished*' men have passed through this house since I came into it! even men of science—(tell John)—we had Dr. Carpenter and a Mr. Grove for three days; and Dr. Carpenter amused the company every evening—at least the female part of it which chose to be so amused—with a small travelling microscope!—I like Mr. Grove best—because he is bad at sleeping and we compared our night-experiences together and got quite friendly on that basis. I wish Colonel Sykes had been among them—as I should like to make a little more love to him for John's sake. Then there have been Poets; Alfred Tennyson among them, going about asking everybody if they like his *Maud*—and reading *Maud* aloud—and talking of Maud, Maud, Maud, till I wished myself far away among people who only read and wrote prose or who neither read nor wrote at all.—Oh Heavens! Yes! I am getting to the same conclusion as George Sand, that the only pleasant people to associate with are the idiots!

I think there must have been about sixty or seventy people staying here since we came—every one of them nearly pretending to be '*one and somewhat*.' The only two perfectly unaffected and *human* individuals were Lord Bessborough and his wife, the daughter of a Duke. *They* 'put on strong shoes' and went out together to take long walks, under an umbrella in the rain—and

I couldn't but think how much less *pretension* I have always observed in people of *really* high rank, than in the philosophers and novelists who make believe to rail at rank.

There was too, an old Scotch engineer for two days, called Fairbairn, whose *broad Scotch* pleased me so much that I sat next him at dinner both days and paid him delicate attentions, to which he seemed duly sensible. Henry Drummond I was also glad to meet because I could talk with *him* about Edward Irving. At present we are in a stratum of Oxford Professors—one of them the stupidest looking mortal I ever saw in a coat and trowsers—I can hardly help screaming with horror every time I look at him—Another of these Oxford Professors has his wife with him—on the strength of her being 'a beautiful Greek' and called Zoe—She is the insipidest little thing you ever saw under the name of a beauty—and after all it was only the mother of her that was a Greek—her father being a Scotchman.

We go home on Monday however—out of it all. The Ashburtons go to town on Monday themselves, on a visit of three days to the Queen at Windsor so there is no fear of our being asked to stay beyond the *month*—and of Mr. C. consenting.

I shall go to see you in your new quarters very soon—kind love to John

Yours affectionately

JANE W C

In 1858 John Welsh was stricken by the family scourge, consumption. Mrs. Carlyle writes to him with an exquisitely framed offer of practical help.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

Thursday (October 1858).

MY DEAR JOHN,—It would seem we have got very very far away from 'the golden age' to judge by the embarrassment people feel, and the roundabout dialect they adopt whenever there is question of *money*, between even those most nearly connected.

Will you permit me to revive the golden age for a moment, and say what I have to say *kurt*<sup>1</sup> *und gut*; having never been able to develop a talent for roundabout in my life!

You have plans to make for the winter—*must do something* to prevent this tendency going further. In making your plans; will you bear in mind that Mr. C has fifty pounds ready, to pay

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Carlyle's German is not above reproach.



your journey to Madeira and back, or to any other foreign place you choose to go to.

This money has as it were dropt to him out of the moon! to *give away* not to keep—so that you can use it without the slightest fear of *inconveniencing* him, or even being under any obligation to him.

I should be heartily glad to know you had determined on something feasible.

I feel the changes of temperature here dreadfully. If that man were not such a great helpless Baby, I would go to Madeira or elsewhere with you myself.

Don't trouble yourself to answer this note. The best and most desired answer will be to come shortly, and tell me you will employ that fifty pounds for the purpose specified,

Yours affectionately

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

John did accept his kinsfolk's help so frankly and simply offered, money which, as has been noted, probably came with grateful appropriateness from the old Welsh family estate of Craigenputtock, now Mrs. Carlyle's property.

He did not, however, go to Madeira. On the advice of the specialist, Dr. Bence Jones, he was taken by his devoted mother to Falmouth, a warm and sheltered spot to which consumptives were frequently sent at this period. The Foxes were a Quaker family of scientific and literary turn, whose beautiful home lay just outside Falmouth. Two of the brothers won scientific distinction; literature remembers Caroline Fox's 'Journal' and the friendships with many notable people, especially Sterling and Mill, who came to Falmouth for their own or their friends' health, and through whom the Foxes first came to know the Carlyles. After two or three weeks Mrs. Carlyle writes to Mrs. Welsh for news of him.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

Wednesday (early November, 1858).

MY DEAR MARGARET,—I wish very much you would write to me. It is cruel to leave me wholly without news of John, when the London fogs and my own weak health tend to make 'all the imaginations of the thought of my heart' as dark and dreary as possible! It is not to be hoped that you can have any material improvement to tell me of already; but at least you might tell

me how you find the place, and the lodging, and the Foxes, and the climate.

John Carlyle has nearly driven me out of my senses, by assaulting me time after time about the *uselessness* of such a change as from Richmond to *Falmouth* and the *absolute necessity* of a *real* change—a change to a dry *tropical* climate—Australia for example. Then Mr. Carlyle backs him out—and without knowing anything of the matter blames *me* because I have not persuaded or compelled John to take a voyage to Australia!! because I don't even at this late date persuade or compel him! *Money* need be no hindrance whatever. Mr. C would be positively *relieved* and *happy* by this voyage being undertaken at his expense. He thinks we are all *trifling* with a very serious case, and that *I* am greatly to *blame*—because I have not succeeding[ed] in *doing the impossible*—viz: in making John and you and Bence Jones and everybody see with John Carlyle's eyes, and carry out the measure *he* recommends. I am told there are still vessels sailing from Plymouth once a fortnight—and John Carlyle says that it would by no means be a bad time to set out. Mr. Carlyle proposed sending John Carlyle down to Falmouth to try and persuade our John!!! and John Carlyle proposed to *me* to go (he) and consult with Bence Jones about it, since I *would* believe that *he* (Jones) had probably as much skill and knowledge as *Dr. Carlyle*! But I got into such a phrenzy of nervousness, at all this urging and remonstrating, without any clear convictions of my own to bear me up; that I burst out crying! and told them—to do what they liked, but not to hold *me* responsible, and expect *me* to play the part of *Fate* any more; or they would throw me into a fever! Since that scene a few days ago, nothing has been said—and indeed this morning, Dr. Carlyle has started for Scotsbrig. But still all this that has been *laid* on me, continues to *weigh* on me. And in repeating it, I feel to be only discharging my conscience. Also I am obeying Mr. Carlyle's express command in urging upon John, that his Life is of more worth a thousand times in his (Mr. C's) eyes than *any* sum of money that could contribute to its preservation.

If I have *said* what I had to say ill—forgive me—for the sake of my good meaning—

Yours affectionately

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

John got my letter? I wrote to the address you gave.

But John could not escape the family destiny. By the following Midsummer he was dead. The last of these letters is from Mrs. Carlyle to John's mother.

5 Cheyne Row, Clelsea

Saturday (June 1859).

Just two lines from myself, dear Margaret, to urge on you, that you should come *here* and recover from the fatigues of the journey, before proceeding to Richmond—since my present state makes it too impossible for *me* to go to Richmond to receive you; as I should otherwise have certainly done. Your home-coming will be too dreadful, poor dear soul! without the petty aggravation of bodily weariness. I will say nothing more—My God what is there to be *said*!—But you know how I feel for you without needing to be told. The merest stranger would feel for you; and I am his cousin—and *know* all that he was.

God comfort you—no mortal need try.

Ever your affectionate friend

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

Mrs. George Welsh, living on at Richmond, kept up the friendship until Mrs. Carlyle's death in 1866. On the preceding day she was at Cheyne Row, and to her Mrs. Carlyle, who had just received her husband's letter telling of the ovation given him at his installation as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, poured out her happiness, exclaiming 'I am glad! Now all my own people will know—now everybody will know, what a great man my husband is!'

On that same day, as Miss MacKnight records, Jane Carlyle gave her aunt a little gift, her own handiwork—possibly the last work of her deft fingers—'a small pincushion, mattress-shaped, covered in rose-coloured silk, decked with a coverlet of finest French embroidery, edged about with a scrap of Valenciennes lace.' This little memento, after Mrs. George Welsh's death, was found, faded with the years, along with the letters now printed, in the davenport which had belonged to her son John.

LEONARD HUXLEY.

## LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE twelfth series of Literary Acrostics begins with No. 45, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of at least £3 will be awarded to the most successful solvers. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is first opened.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 45.

*(The First of the Series.)*

'Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.'  
'Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.'

1. 'Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the——.'
2. 'Better fifty years of——than a cycle of Cathay.'
3. '—— on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean,——.'
4. 'And I will make thee beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies;  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of——.'
5. 'The muscles of his brawny arms  
Are strong as—— bands.'
6. 'Here thou, great——! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea.'

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page xii of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue.

4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.

5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable to send them at all.

6. Solvers who write a second letter to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.

7. Answers to Acrostic No. 45 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than November 19.

PROEM: Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, iv., 5.

LIGHTS:

ANSWER TO No. 44.

1. P	uc	K
2. E	span	A
3. T	albo	T
4. R	ashleig	H
5. U	rsul	A
6. C	roake	R
7. H	ot	I
8. I	denstei	N
9. O	rian	A

1. Hood, *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*.

2. Clough, *Mari Magno. My tale*.

3. Southey, *Joan of Arc*, Tenth Book.

4. Scott, *Rob Roy*, ch. 11.

5. Borrow, *The Romany Rye*, ch. 10.

6. Goldsmith, *The Good-Natured Man*, i.

7. Lamb, *Essays of Elia. A Dissertation upon Roast Pig*.

8. Byron, *Werner*, i., 1.

9. Tennyson, *The Ballad of Oriana*.

Acrostic No. 43 ('Forget-me-nots'): Correct answers were received from 16 solvers, one light was missed by 61 competitors, and the other 31 competitors were less successful. There were also three answers without a coupon. Every answer had the first light right, very few had the fifth right, and the third and sixth also presented difficulties.

The first correct answer that was opened was from 'Twain,' and she takes the monthly prize. Miss Tyack, 33 Apsley Road, Clifton, Bristol, will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

Competitors are requested not to send pins, clips, or other paper-fasteners; their coupons do not require to be affixed in any way. A half-sheet of notepaper is best for answers; flimsy paper and big sheets are both undesirable.

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